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21st century defence

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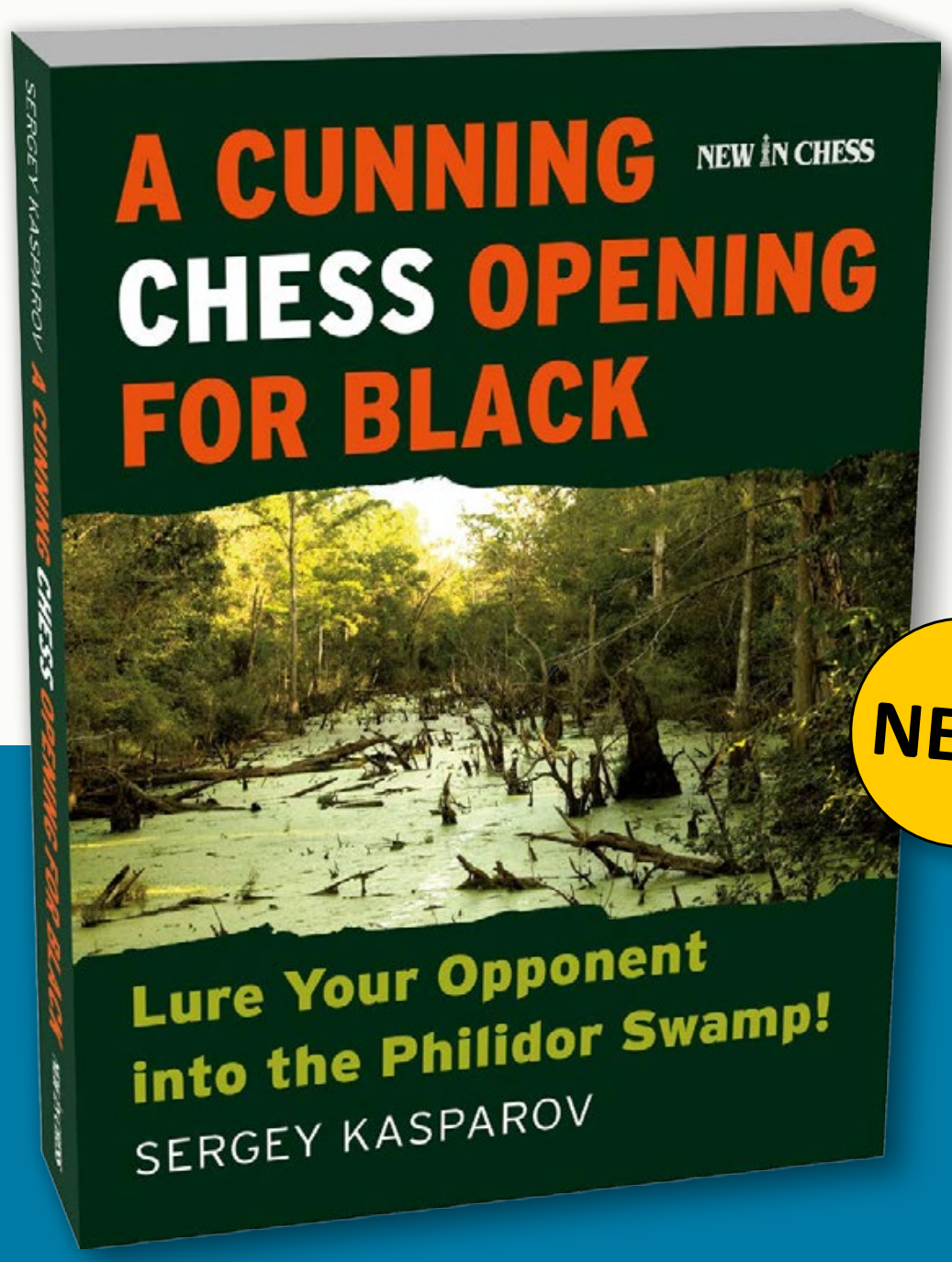

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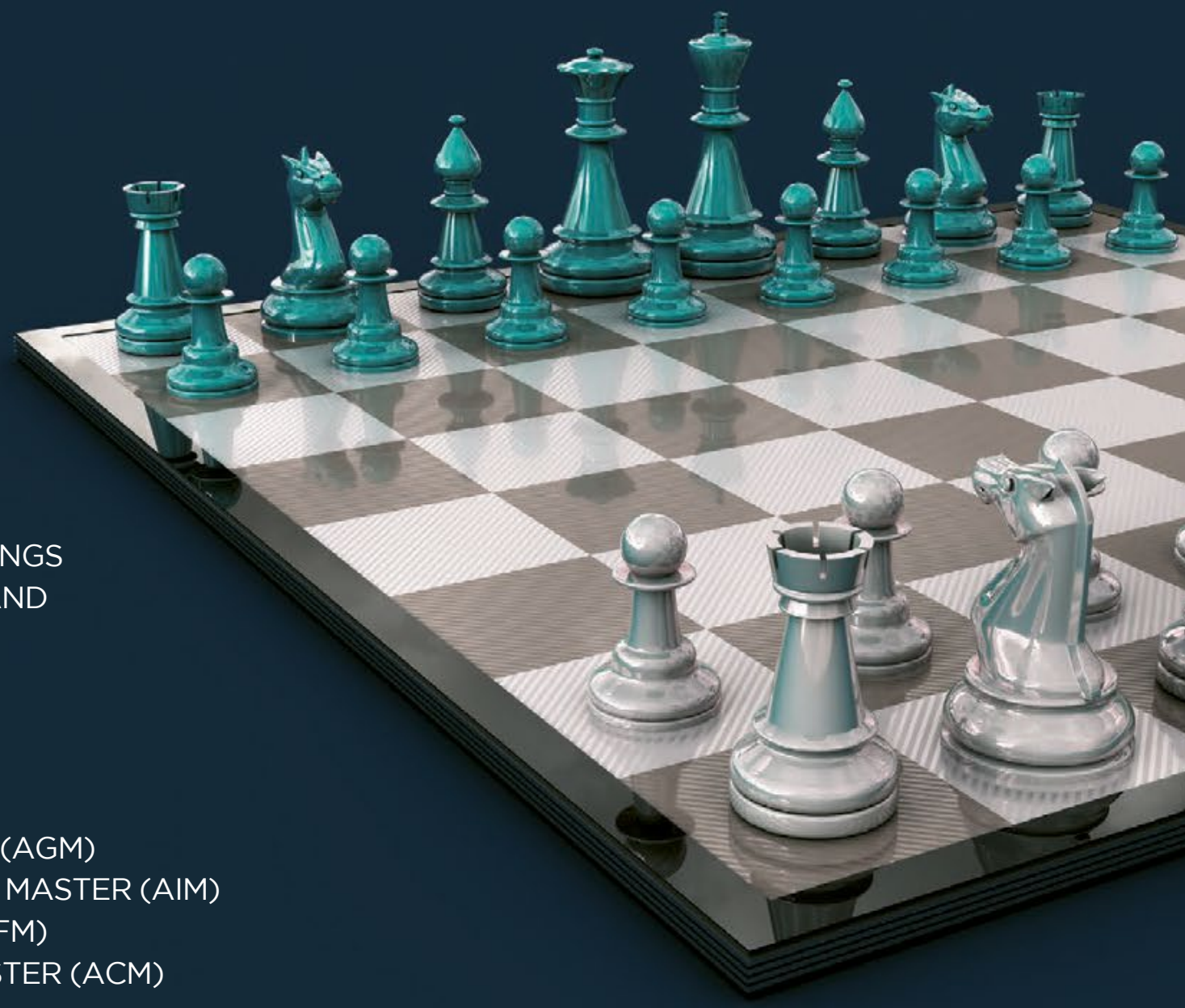

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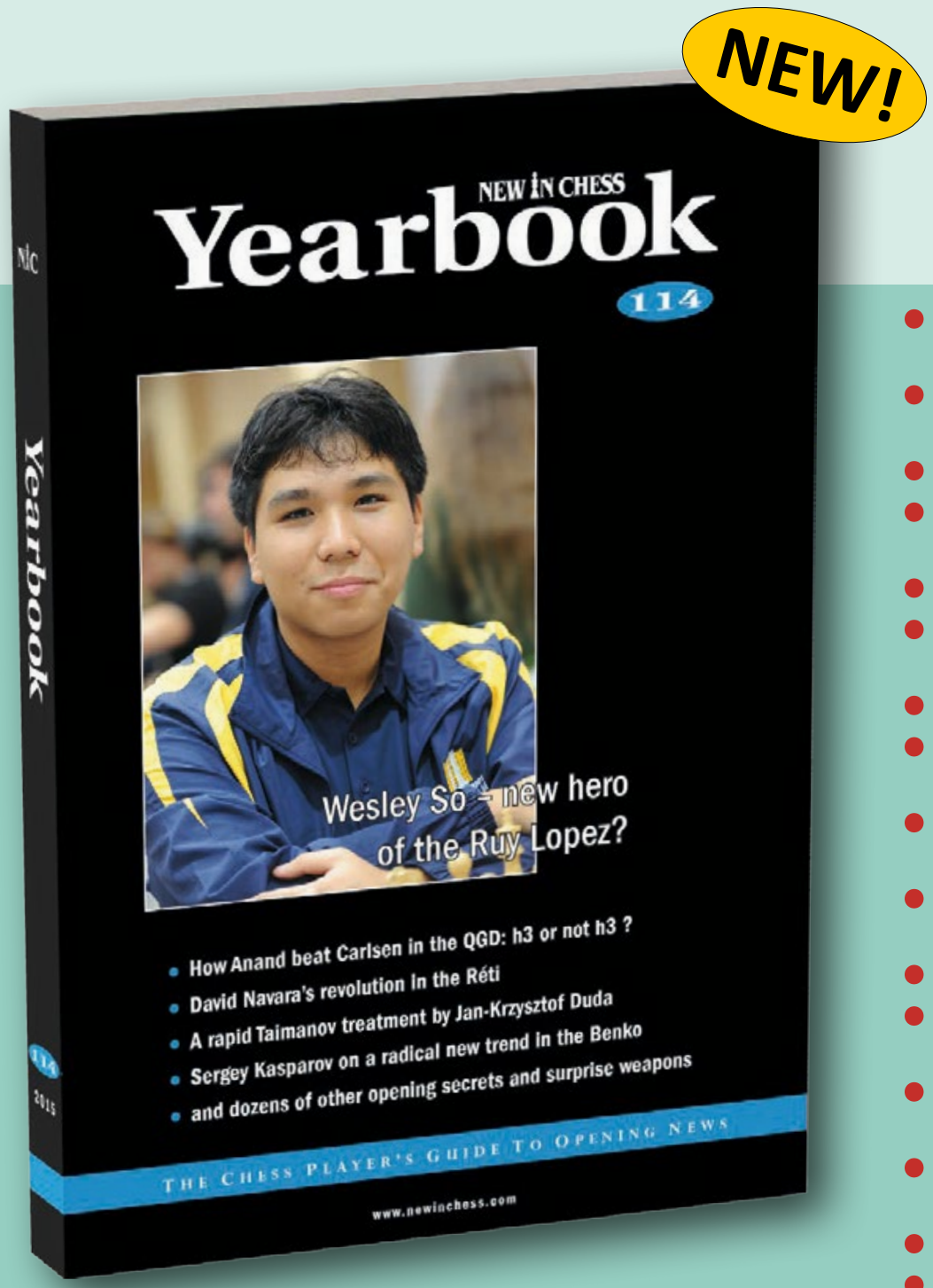
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Contents

2015#2
NEW IN CHESS

'I never watch series, I prefer educational channels.'

8 NIC's Café

10 A Year in the Life
How does Magnus Carlsen's first year as World Champion compare to his predecessors?

16 The Master
His start was shaky, but once he picked up speed with a six-game winning streak, nothing and no one could stop Magnus Carlsen from claiming the 77th Tata Steel Masters.

28 Interview
The World Champion speaks.

50 Vive la Différence
Nigel Short wonders why men's and women's brains should function in the same way.

52 Parimarjan's Chess Gym
When is the time to calculate?

58 Round about Midnight
An Armageddon game decided the Grenke Chess Classic in Baden-Baden.

73 Maximize Your Tactics

74 Packing My Library
Hans Ree on acquiring and shedding books.

76 When the Going Gets Fast...
The 4th Zurich Chess Challenge was a tight race between Vishy Anand and Hikaru Nakamura, decided in the latter's favour in another Armageddon tiebreak.

84 The Eyes of Viktor Kortchnoi
One of our greatest heroes seen through the eyes of world-famous novelist Arturo Pérez-Reverte.

93 Fair & Square

94 Sadler on Books

100 The Nakamura Show
Jan Timman looks at the American's win in Gibraltar.

106 Just Checking
Who would Ljubomir Ljubojevic like to be if he weren't himself?

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COVER
Hikaru Nakamura: Jacek Pulawski

'Botvinnik was a surprisingly creative player, especially in opening analysis. He had very creative ideas. It's funny that these ideas have survived into the modern age.' – *Magnus Carlsen*

SUBSCRIPTIONS: p. 102 COLOPHON: p. 89

LANGELIHLE CHAGWE

Changed Days

The world rejoiced twenty-five years ago as Nelson Mandela was released from prison. The anti-apartheid campaigner had spent most of his near three-decade sentence on Robben Island, a penal institute notorious for its brutality, before going on to become president of South Africa. Also there was Jacob Zuma, the current South African president.

Zuma says chess gave solace to him and other prisoners on Robben Island. 'It propelled our minds beyond the confines of the prison walls and allowed us to reflect and to position our thoughts strategically to fight the regime,' he once stated. 'Many comrades made chess sets out of soap and driftwood that allowed us to continue to play this noble and great game.'

Since taking office, Zuma has advocated the importance of chess in education to help underprivileged children. Changed days indeed then for the president, who instead of famously fashioning a chess set out of soap and driftwood now sponsors the annual JG Zuma Chess Tournament for kids in his homeland of Nkandla in northern KwaZulu-Natal.

Zuma though still likes to play, and he surprised the youngest competitor there, seven-year-old Minenhle Zungu, by challenge him to a game. It was, of course, a diplomatic draw. ■

NIC's Café

The illustrated chess man

Sometimes you meet people who have a love for chess written all over their face. At least, that's what you think. It must come as a real shocker if you happen to run into Matt Gone, a tattoo artist who calls himself Chess. With 98 per cent of his body covered in tattoos (despite repeated attempts the ink refused to stay in the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet), Mr. Gone (his real name) is one of the world's most heavily tattooed people. The chequered pattern on his head inspired the nickname Chess. There are no further chess motifs on his body, as far as we managed or wanted to see.

One way of spending $42,000.

All in all 'Chess' was quite a project. It took 14 years, required the inspiration of 80 artists and cost $42,000. That's not normal, we hear you say, and of course you're right. To his followers, Mr. Gone explains that he was born with birth defects and that the tattoos are meant to hide them and keep him from hating his body. He also suffers from a rare medical condition, Poland's syndrome (patients are born without or with abnormal muscles on one side of the chest wall), and he has been a spokesperson for the Poland's Syndrome Association for over 25 years.

So if that explains it, very few, if any, of our readers will feel the need to follow in Matt Gone's footsteps. But since it's better to be safe than sorry, we will hereby reveal what 'Chess', much to our relief, said in an interview: he has no real interest in chess and very much prefers checkers.

And the winner isn't...

Well, Benedict Cumberbatch, as we tipped in the previous issue. It seems the crystal ball behind the counter at NIC's Café is a little bit foggier than we thought, and we backed the wrong British actor in a portrayal of a scientific genius in the Best Actor category at the Oscars.

The big winner was, of course, Eddie Redmayne, for his moving performance as Stephen Hawking, in *The Theory of Everything*. But when you take into account some other facts, you can see how we made the mistake we did. Firstly, Cumberbatch and Redmayne are very good friends, with some people even saying they are also similar in appearance. Secondly, Cumberbatch was actually the first actor to play the scientist in his also not-to-be missed performance in the 2004 BBC titular drama, *Hawking*, that won him a Golden Nymph at the Festival de Télévision de Monte-Carlo.

Another interesting fact about both Oscar-nominated movies was that, despite the fact that *The Imitation Game* was the one with an actual two-time British chess champion, Hugh Alexander, in a supporting role (played by Matthew Goode), it was *The Theory of Everything* that won our very own Oscar for having all the best chess scenes in it!

Eddie Redmayne's moving performance as Stephen Hawking rightly won him an Oscar.

Early on in the movie, at the seminar room in Cambridge, rather than paying attention to the lecture – that Hawking is obviously way, way ahead of – he's sneak-reading the position after Black's 28th move in the game between Alekhine and Sultan Khan, Berne 1932, that appeared in Alekhine's book *My Best Games of Chess, 1924-1937*.

And after Hawking's degenerative medical condition has been diagnosed, he's seen studying chess in his Cambridge student quarters using a wonderful worn wooden chess set from the period, as shown in the publicity shot opposite. And for those wondering what book he's reading – and please don't all call our sales department hotline at once to order it – it's the fictitious *Chess: Advance Chess Strategy*, by 'Pavel Brinsky'.

So there: now you all know *The Theory of Everything*, at least chess-wise, in Redmayne's Oscar-winning performance!

King Solomon's Fine

It's been a long-time since the late Donald Woods, the famous chess-loving newspaper editor and biographer of Steve Biko, drafted the first non-racial constitution of the South African Chess Federation. But how he would have applauded the recent good news that Kenny Solomon, who successfully escaped the plight of township violence in his youth, has become South Africa's first grandmaster.

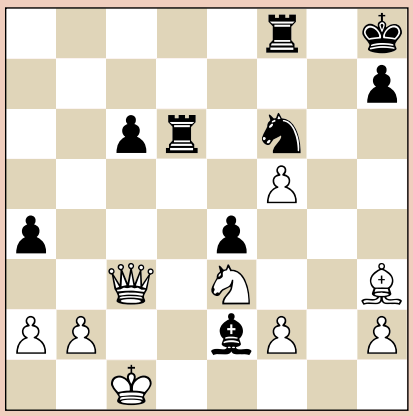
One of eight children, Solomon took up the game at 13, while living in Mitchells Plain, a township with the highest crime rate in a country that's notorious for gang violence and drug abuse. His own website states: 'Kenny realized that if he didn't create his own future, he would merely become a pawn in this scene, trapped in the violent, oppressive cycle of gangsterism.'

All his hard work was finally

rewarded when he was awarded the grandmaster title, following his victory in the Africa individual championship in Windhoek, Namibia. Solomon, 33, now becomes only the second grandmaster in sub-Saharan Africa after Amon Simutowe of Zambia.

Although he already had three norms to his name, he never attained the required rating for the title. But he seized his moment at the African championship; scoring 7/9 to tie with favourite Ahmed Adly of Egypt, he took the gold medal with the better tiebreak score (which included a crucial win over Adly). This was enough to make Solomon's fine dream come true, as a new FIDE rule directly awards the GM title to the winners of the continental championships.

'I came to the Windhoek tournament with the aim to win,' Solomon said. 'It was not just the opportunity to gain the GM title, but it is a special feeling to win an African Championship.'

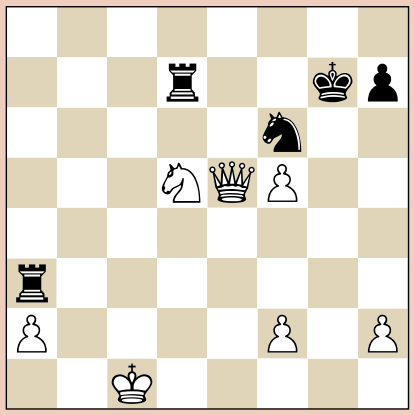


Kenny Solomon – Ahmed Adly
Windhoek 2014
position after 28....♖d6

29.♗g4 A tense struggle is developing for both players – which is not made any easier by the ensuing time scramble. **29...♗b5** Adly misses his best shot here with 29...♖d3! 30.♕b4 (30.♕e5 ♖xe3!) 30...c5 31.♕xc5 ♖dd8!, and it's not so easy to win for White. **30.♕e5 ♖fd8 31.♗d1 ♔g7 32.♗c2 ♔f7 33.♗xe4 ♖6d7 34.♗xc6! ♗xc6 35.♕e6+ ♔g7 36.♕xc6 a3 37.bxa3 ♖d2**

Kenny Solomon, South Africa's first GM, gives a simul against kids.

38.♕c3 ♖2d3 39.♕c7+ ♖8d7 40.♕e5 ♖xa3 41.♘d5



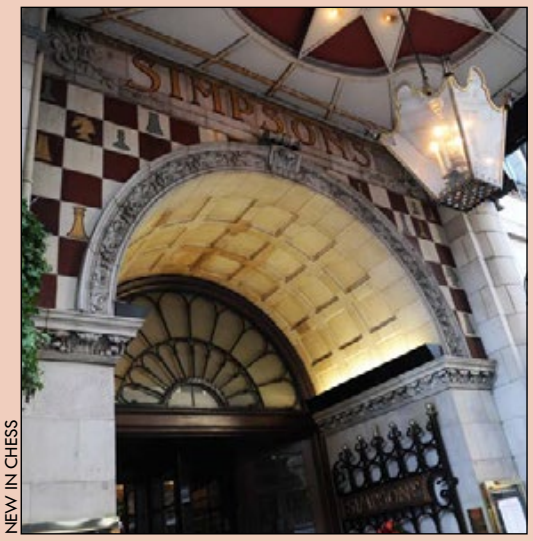
41...♖a6! A good try – Black has swindling possibilities with mating threats. **42.♘b4 ♖ad6 43.♔b2 ♖d4 44.a3 ♖e4 45.♕c3 ♖ed4 46.♕g3+ ♔f7 47.♕b3+ ♔f8 48.♕e6 ♘e4 49.♕h6+ ♔g8 50.♕e6+ ♔g7 51.♕e5+ ♔h6** 51...♔g8 52.♘c2 wins. **52.h4!** Easily winning now. **52...♘xf2 53.♕f6+ 1-0**

A beef with Simpson's

With its richly reassuring fare illuminated by chandeliers and wood panelling interrupted by the odd monarch in oils, intertwined with the even odder chess memorabilia, Simpson's-in-the-Strand has been delighting patrons for almost two centuries. But now, apparently London's oldest restaurant could be off the menu for the capital's social scene.

We were saddened to hear that there's currently a beef at Simpson's, with its owners, the Savoy hotel feeling that a modern-day revamp is required. It is seeking a chef or, worse, a brand, to run this staunchly traditional establishment, famous for its popular carvery trolleys, which could well result in the loss of its identity and name – an identity and name that is synonymous with our game's own rich heritage.

Since opening in 1828, the restaurant, which was founded as the Grand Divan chess club and coffee house, has established itself as a dining institution. In 1848, the name 'Simpson's' was added after a deal with caterer John Simpson. With its impressive chess-themed façade, in its heyday it was the centre of the chess universe. Howard Staunton frequented the smoky premises in the 1840s, and historically, in 1851, it was where the Immortal Game between Adolf Anderssen and Lionel Kieseritsky was played.



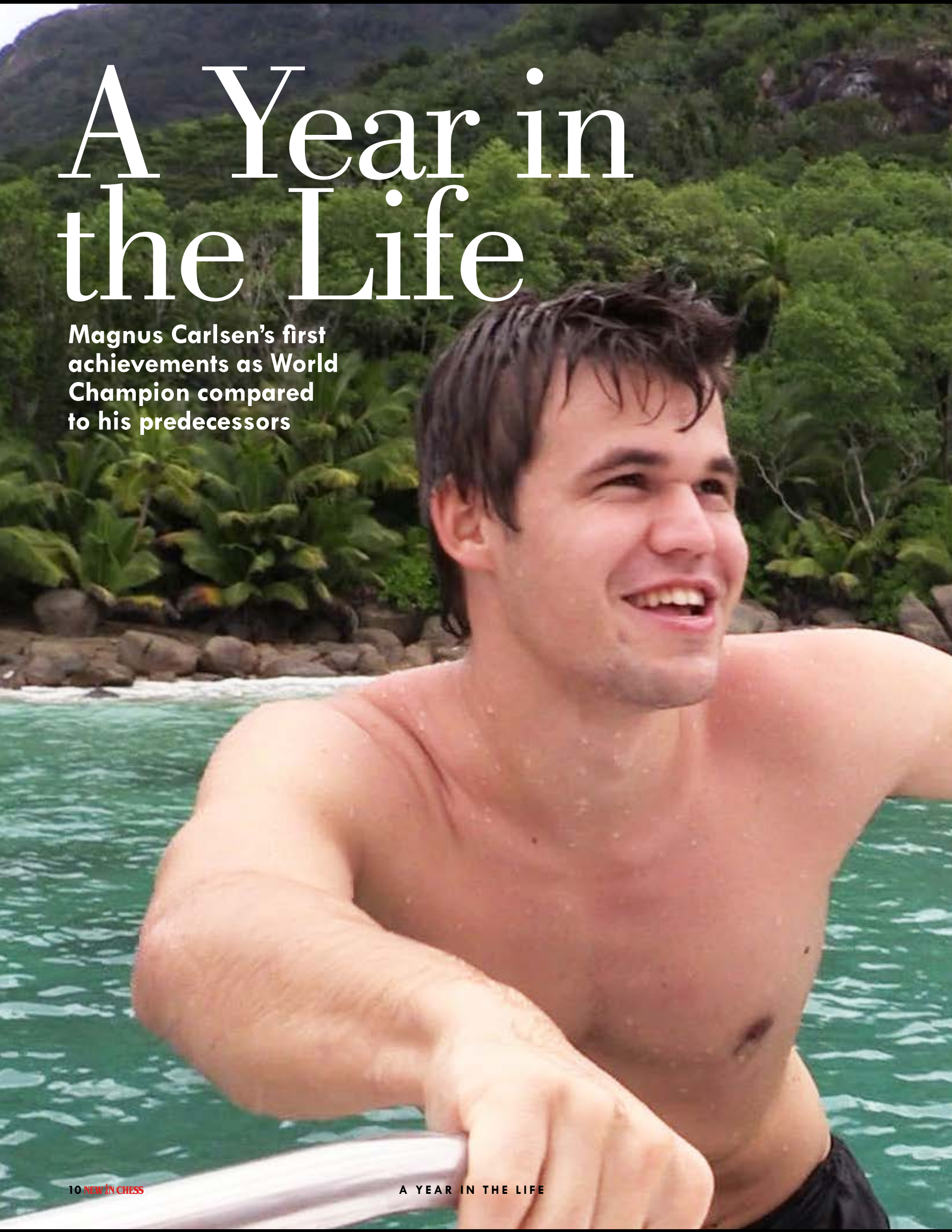
NEW IN CHESS

The ornamental chess-themed façade of Simpson's-in-the-Strand, London's oldest restaurant.

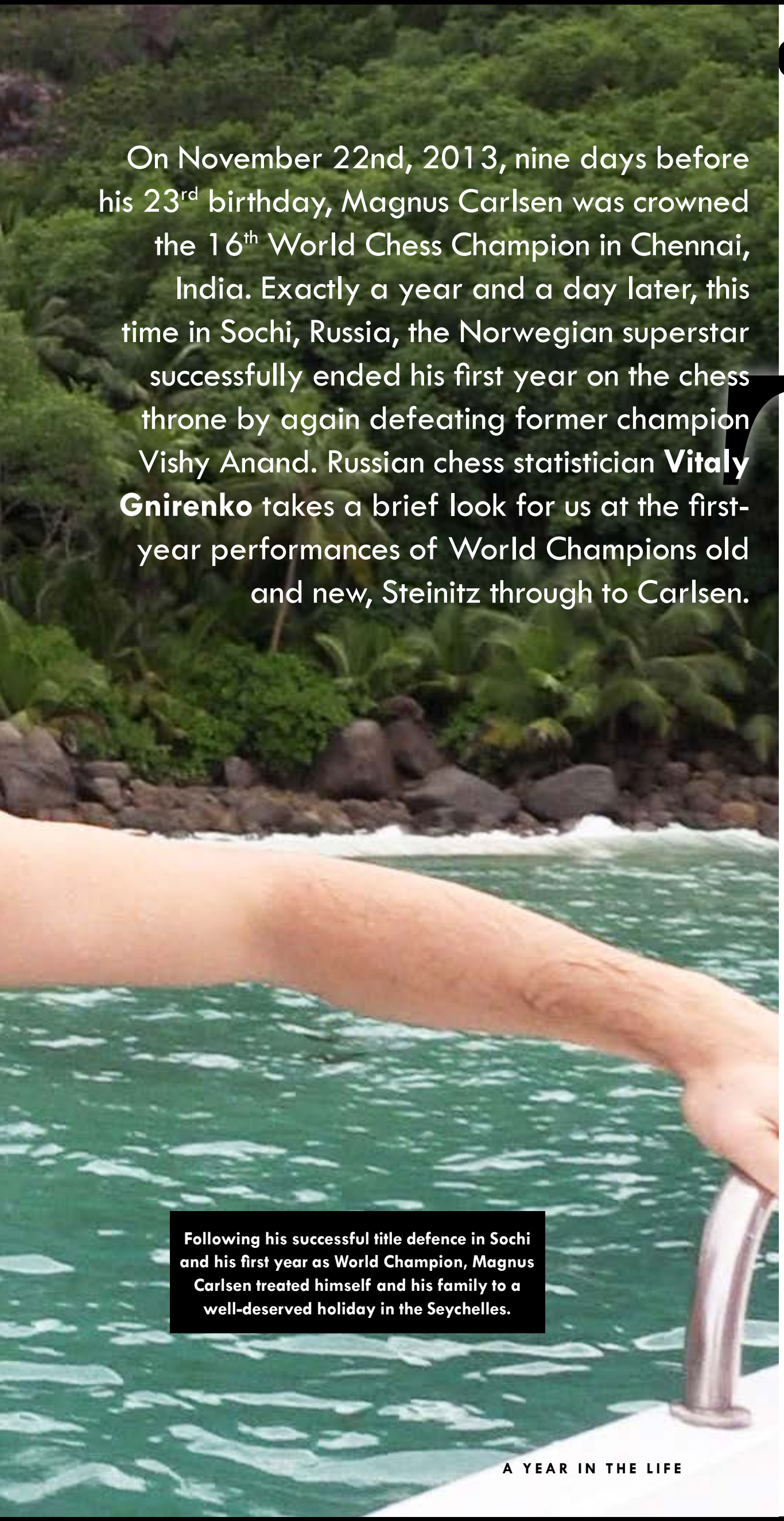
And the chess played at Simpson's among the world elites isn't just associated with Victorian times. In 2001, Garry Kasparov held his 'back-to-the-future' odds match there with Terry Chapman. And, just three years ago, it proved to be the very popular and sentimental venue for the London leg of the FIDE Grand Prix. Simpson's is regarded as the 'spiritual home' of chess – so long may this tradition continue! ■

A Year in the Life

Magnus Carlsen's first achievements as World Champion compared to his predecessors



On November 22nd, 2013, nine days before his 23rd birthday, Magnus Carlsen was crowned the 16th World Chess Champion in Chennai, India. Exactly a year and a day later, this time in Sochi, Russia, the Norwegian superstar successfully ended his first year on the chess throne by again defeating former champion Vishy Anand. Russian chess statistician **Vitaly Gnirenko** takes a brief look for us at the first-year performances of World Champions old and new, Steinitz through to Carlsen.



Following his successful title defence in Sochi and his first year as World Champion, Magnus Carlsen treated himself and his family to a well-deserved holiday in the Seychelles.

The first year of Magnus Carlsen being at the summit of the chess Olympus allows us the opportunity to reflect and refresh our memories about the lives of his predecessors during a similar period of their careers. Winning the highest title tended to have a great impact – personally and professionally – on their future moves, choice of competitions and overall performance. Sometimes this was a dangerous period when the World Champion was vulnerable, sometimes the euphoria subsided quickly. Promises were often left unfulfilled. The chess world always observes the reign of a World Champion very carefully, seeking further evidence of his superiority. Not all consider him to be the best player. Opponents can be doubly motivated when they face the champion, hoping for a sensational victory. Chess history indicates that not all World Champions successfully managed to dispel any doubts about their superiority during the first year of their reign. The first four World Champions – Wilhelm Steinitz, Emanuel Lasker,

José Raul Capablanca and Alexander Alekhine – didn't play in official tournaments during their first year as Champions. Instead, they devoted themselves to other activities. Steinitz's main occupation was not chess but journalism. He published countless articles in American newspapers and was the founding editor of the *International Chess Magazine,* hailed as one of the greatest chess periodicals. Then there was Lasker, who toured and lectured, and also wrote his book *Common Sense In Chess*. In 1921, following his defeat of Lasker, Capablanca married and settled down to family life. During this period he also worked on his book *Chess Fundamentals*. Alekhine popularized the game in a different way, touring far and wide giving numerous simultaneous displays. He also wrote his books *My Best Games of Chess, 1908-1923* and *New York International Chess Tournament, 1927.*

Max Euwe, 5th World Champion **Table 1**

Event	Result +	–	=	Final ranking	Loses to
Noteboom Mem, Leiden 1936	2	0	1	1	
Zandvoort 1936	5	1	5	2 (1. Fine)	Bogoljubow
Nottingham 1936	7	2	5	3-5 (1.Botvinnik, 2.Capablanca)	Alekhine Lasker
Amsterdam 1936	3	0	4	1-2 (with Fine)	
	17	3	15		

The fifth World Champion, Dr. **Max Euwe**, became the first champion to play actively during his first year as World Champion – a fact that is surprising, as he wasn't a full-time professional player when he defeated Alekhine in their World Championship Match of 1935. His main occupation was teaching mathematics, and he continued to do so during his two-year reign as champion. **Euwe**'s results from 1936 are summarized in Table 1.

Examining the results in this table, we note that the most important players of the day participated in all the tournaments (with the exception of Leiden). At Zandvoort, there were rising stars Reuben Fine and Paul Keres; there were also experienced stars Efim Bogoljubow, Savielly Tartakower, Géza Maróczy, Ernst Grünfeld and Rudolf Spielmann. Nottingham 1936 is famous for having five World Champions among its field: Lasker, Capablanca and Alekhine being ex-champions; Euwe, the reigning champion; and future champion Mikhail Botvinnik. Also in the mix were potential title challengers Fine, Samuel Reshevsky and Salo Flohr.

Euwe's result (only half point behind the winners) can be considered a success. We should take into account that Euwe came to the tournament after an intensive academic work year and the competition in Zandvoort.

After a little rest, Euwe was undefeated at the final competition of 1936 in Amsterdam – where he also won against former champion Alekhine, who came third.

Mikhail Botvinnik became the sixth World Champion in 1948, winning the tournament in The Hague and Moscow. After that, he worked on his PhD thesis in electrical engineering, and during the next three years didn't play in any official competitions.

Vassily Smyslov, 7th World Champion **Table 2**

Event	Result +	–	=	Loses to
European Team Championship, Vienna 1957	2	1	3	M.Filip
WChM vs M.Botvinnik, Moscow 1958	5	7	11	M.Botvinnik
	7	8	14	

The seventh World Champion, **Vassily Smyslov**, gained the title on 27th April 1957. During his one and only year as champion, he only played in one team tournament and the return match in which ex-champion Botvinnik defeated him.

The eighth World Champion, **Mikhail Tal**, like Smyslov, only held the title for a year – and indeed, both became known in Russian circles as 'the winter kings' due to their brief tenure as champions. Tal's results of that year are summarized in Table 3.

Tal, in his memoir, *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal*, noted that during his period as champion he remembered it as being mostly successful, particularly at Hamburg and Stockholm, and also for his famous French Defence draw against Bobby Fischer at the Leipzig Olympiad. He also wrote his entertaining and free-spirited book *Tal-Botvinnik, 1960* – hailed by many as one of the best books ever to be written on a world championship match. It should be noted also that, during this period, Tal's serious health problems surfaced.

Mikhail Tal, 8th World Champion **Table 3**

Event	Result +	–	=	Final ranking	Loses to
Match FRG-USSR, Hamburg 1960	7	0	1	-	
Olympiad, Leipzig 1960	8	1	6	-	J. Penrose
Stockholm 1960/61	8	0	3	1	
WChM vs. Botvinnik , Moscow 1961	5	10	6	-	
	28	11	16		

When **Tigran Petrosian** became World Champion in 1963, he said: 'Botvinnik didn't play often, but I think you have to play in tournaments with the strongest grandmasters in the world.' The results of Tigran Petrosian during his first year as champion are summarized in Table 4.

Tigran Petrosian, 9th World Champion **Table 4**

Event	Result +	–	=	Final ranking	Loses to
Piatigorsky Cup, Los Angeles 1963	4	1	9	1-2 with Keres	Gligoric
III Spartakiad USSR, Moscow 1963	4	2	3	-	Kortchnoi Geller
	8	3	12		

The tenth World Champion, **Boris Spassky**, promised to play more often after his victory over Petrosian. He kept his promise but wasn't overly satisfied with his results. We can deduce this from his interview in San Juan: 'I understood that particular attention was being paid to my first performance with the World Champion's title, and I didn't feel confident enough. In the olden days, players who had won the title of World Champion went 'underground' for quite a long period to completely get back to normal and prepare properly for new battles. But I had to sit down at the board soon after my match against Petrosian.' The results of Spassky during the first year as champion are in Table 5.

The eleventh World Champion, **Robert James** 'Bobby' **Fischer**, gained a famous and convincing victory over Spassky during their 1972 match in Reykjavik. He promised to make the game more professional, also stating that 'All I want to do, ever, is play chess'. Immediately after winning the title, he started to discuss the possibilities of a return match with Spassky. This match had to take place in Las Vegas, and with a record (for that time) prize purse of $1 million. The then FIDE president, Dr Max Euwe, supported the idea – but nothing ever came of the promises. And as we all know, Fischer didn't play in any official tournaments during his three-year reign as champion – and indeed, didn't return to competitive play for another 20 years.

Boris Spassky, 10th World Champion **Table 5**

Event	Result +	–	=	Final ranking	Loses to
Match Yugoslavia-USSR, Skopje 1969	0	0	3	-	
San Juan 1969	8	0	7	1	
Palma de Mallorca 1969	3	0	14	5 (1. Larsen)	
'Match of the Century' USSR vs Rest of the World, Belgrade 1970	1	1	1	-	Larsen
Leiden 1970	2	0	10	1	
	14	1	35		

Anatoly Karpov, 12th World Champion **Table 6**

Event	Result +	–	=	Final ranking	Loses to
Vidmar Memorial, Portoroz/Ljubljana 1975	7	0	8	1	
VI Spartakiad USSR, Riga 1975	4	0	3	-	
Milan 1975:	3	1	7	2-4 (1. Portisch)	Andersson
- Match vs Petrosian (semifinal)	0	0	4		
- Match vs Portish (final)	1	0	5		
Skopje 1976	10	0	5	1	
	25	1	32		

By default, **Anatoly Karpov** became the twelfth World Champion when Fischer refused to defend his title. But unlike his predecessors, Karpov had to prove he was worthy of the title by virtue of his tournament performances – and he did so, with a series of dominating tournament wins and team results, as the evidence shows in Table 6.

Garry Kasparov, 13th World Champion **Table 7**

Event	Result +	–	=
Match vs Timman	3	1	2
Match vs Miles	5	0	1
Match vs Karpov	5	4	15
	13	5	18

The thirteenth World Champion, **Garry Kasparov**, had a difficult task. After two very hard matches – one of which was controversially terminated after several months of intense battle – against his arch-rival Karpov, in 1984-1985, he then had less than one year to prepare for a return match. He wrote about that period: 'Time was running out, but my training team worked very efficiently. Keeping in mind the sad experiences of Smyslov and Tal, and having absorbed Botvinnik's iron training, I had done excellent preparation and I felt close to a new level of chess understanding.'

The new champion did indeed keep his level of preparation in shape, playing high-level training matches with two of the best from the West. In December 1985, he defeated Dutch star Jan Timman (+3, –1, =2), who was then rated third in the world. He followed this up in May 1986 by

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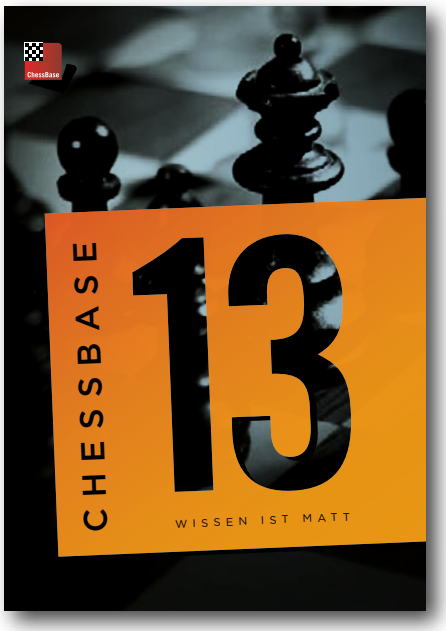

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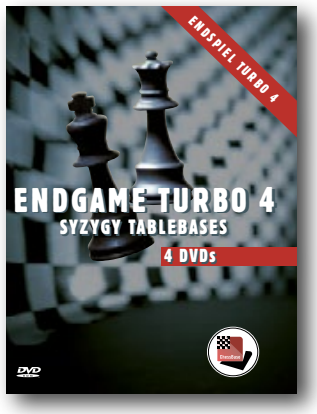

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crushing the original style of England's Tony Miles (+5, –0, =1).
Kasparov concluded his year on the throne on a high, with a victory (+5, –4, =15) in his return match against Karpov, split between London and Leningrad.

Vladimir Kramnik, 14th World Champion **Table 8**

Event	Result +	–	=	Final ranking	Loses to
Wijk aan Zee 2001	4	1	8	3-4 (1. Kasparov)	Morozevich, 5-7
Astana 2001	4	1	5	2	Kasparov, 1
Dortmund 2001	3	0	7	1-2 (with Topalov)	
	11	2	20		

The fourteenth World Champion, **Vladimir Kramnik**, after his unexpected victory over Kasparov in London in 2000, was unable to prove to the chess world his superiority over his predecessor (Table 8).

The fifteenth World Champion, **Vishy Anand**, had only one year to prepare for his return match against ex-champion Kramnik. He had some modest performances over the period – his strongest opponent, Levon Aronian, beat him twice – but if you take into account that the task in hand for the champion was to prepare for his upcoming rematch, it was a successful period, because in October 2008 he confidently beat Kramnik (+3, –1, =7) to retain the title.

Vishy Anand, 15th World Champion **Table 9**

Event	Result +	–	=	Final ranking	Loses to
European Club Cup, Kemer 2007	1	0	2	-	
Team ch. Germany, Hamburg 2007	0	0	2	-	
Wijk aan Zee 2008	3	1	9	3-4 (1. Aronian)	Radjabov
Morelia/Linares 2008	4	1	9	1	Aronian
Bilbao 2008	0	2	8	6	Topalov Aronian
	8	4	30		

The sixteenth and current World Champion, **Magnus Carlsen**, after his first victory over Anand, took a two-month rest following his title match. When he returned to active duty, it was in some of the strongest tournaments ever, along with many of his main rating rivals and potential title challengers (Table 10). Although he didn't always take first place, he easily kept his standing at the top of the rating list, whilst at the same time making preparations for his main competition: his return match with Anand.

In his first year as champion Carlsen also captured the world titles in rapid and blitz to become the first player in history to hold the 'triple crown' in chess. But in the same year, he also suffered two defeats to rising star Fabiano Caruana, whom many regard as one of the Norwegian's main title challengers in the years to come. But Carlsen's star is far from waning, as can be read in this issue, as – following his successful rematch win over Anand last November – he started 2015 on a high note with a brace of super-tournament victories at the Tata Steel Masters in Wijk aan Zee and the Grenke Classic in Baden-Baden. ■

Magnus Carlsen, 16th World Champion **Table 10**

Event	Result +	–	=	Final ranking	Loses to
Chess Challenge, Zurich 2014	3	0	2	1	
Gashimov Mem, Shamkir 2014	5	2	3	1	Caruana Radjabov
Norway Chess, Stavanger 2014	1	0	8	2 (1.Karjakin)	
Olympiad, Tromsø 2014	5	2	2	-	Naiditsch Saric
Sinquefield Cup, St Louis 2014	2	1	7	2 (1. Caruana)	Caruana
WChM vs Anand, Sochi 2014	3	1	7	-	Anand
	19	6	29		

The 'Chigorin Club'

Chess statistician Vitaly Gnirenko is also the founder of the Russian online 'Chigorin Club' website (in Russian) that charts a historic roll call of players who, through the years, have defeated World Champions, from Steinitz through to Carlsen. To qualify for the 'Chigorin Club' you have to defeat the reigning World Champion in a classical game, and you should not have been or become World Champion yourself. The initial inductee, claims Gnirenko, is the founding father of Russian chess, Mikhail Chigorin, hence his naming of the club. One of the more recent inductees is Germany's Arkadij Naiditsch, who can now also claim an update to the site with a second win over Carlsen in 2015, in Baden-Baden, to go alongside his win in 2014. Surprising, because, when he featured in Just Checking (see New In Chess 2013/2), his answer to our question, *Who is the greatest player of all time?* was 'Magnus Carlsen. I don't see how to beat him.'(!)

Wijk aan Zee

Carlsen calls the tune in Tata Steel Masters

World Champion triumphs as new rivals jockey for position

His start was shaky, but once he picked up speed with a six-game winning streak (his longest ever), nothing and no one could stop Magnus Carlsen from claiming the Tata Steel Masters in Wijk aan Zee. Although the World Champion confirmed his status of best player on the planet, he will have noticed that the status quo is shifting. The Norwegian's supremacy wasn't challenged by last year's winner Levon Aronian or the world's number two Fabiano Caruana, but by an eager young quartet that finished half a point behind him: Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Ding Liren, Wesley So and our reporter Anish Giri. And what about 15-year-old Wei Yi, who swept the Challengers with a 2804 performance?

The cast of the 77th Tata Steel Chess Masters in The Hague with the Mauritshuis Museum and the Dutch Parliament in the background: Wesley So, Teimour Radjabov, Baadur Jobava, Magnus Carlsen, Radek Wojtaszek, Fabiano Caruana, Vassily Ivanchuk, Hou Yifan, Ivan Saric, Ding Liren, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Loek van Wely, Levon Aronian and Anish Giri.

Let's be frank, nowadays there are two types of top events: those with Magnus Carlsen and those without him. So, small wonder that the first appearance of the Viking after his successful defence of his title in Sochi was eagerly awaited by chess fans all over the world. Last year, the World Champion skipped Wijk aan Zee, where he had been a regular guest ever since his spectacular debut in 2004, but this time he had let it be known well in advance that he wanted to play again in the cold and cosy seaside village, which is, after all, one of the capitals of chess.

Following last year's successful experiment, two of the rounds of the Tata Steel tournament were again played elsewhere, on the principle 'If you don't come to Tata Steel Chess, then Tata Steel Chess will come to you'. Round 5 took place in 'De Rotterdam', a brand-new multifunctional building designed by world-famous architect Rem Koolhaas in the city of... yup, Rotterdam, while Round 10 was hosted in the press centre of the Dutch parliament (called Nieuwspoort) in the heart of The Hague, also known as the International City of Peace and Justice.

A lot can be said about the typical atmosphere of a tournament that brings together professional top-level chess and many hundreds of amateur players. And every year, Tata Steel Chess is more than just chess; it is also a collection of stories. Perhaps I could tell you about how Magnus Carlsen and Loek van Wely were rolling on the floor fighting for the ball during a basketball game. Or perhaps I could tell you how Maxime Vachier-Lagrave was trying to impress the crowd at the goodbye party with his moves on the dancefloor. And you might have liked to know who that blonde girl with Wesley So during that party was? And which player from the Challengers was especially curious about the latter? Or what video game Magnus was playing the day before the rest day? Or why Levon Aronian played cards with Magnus?

Or maybe you would have liked to find out what unfolded after 1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8 3.f4!? in the blitz game Giri-Carlsen (aka The Only Sober Guy vs. The World Champion) at the aforementioned party, which ended in 1-0 (sorry, I just had to throw that out there).

But for the moment, let's stick to the chess. Because that's what we are here for, aren't we?

Whilst no one doubts Carlsen's superiority on the chessboard, it had actually been a little while since the Norwegian last won a tournament. Wijk aan Zee seemed like a perfect platform to confirm his status, with a 14-player field packed with stars like Fabiano Caruana, Levon Aronian and others, but also with some lower-rated GMs like Women's World Champion Hou Yifan, Loek van Wely, Ivan Saric and Baadur Jobava. Under the watchful eye of Norwegian cameras (this time the commercial channel TV2 had obtained the rights to broadcast the games live on Norwegian television) the champion had quite some expectations to live up to. His start, however, was anything but convincing.

Having drawn his first two games in rather uneventful fashion (versus yours truly and Wesley So), Magnus was facing Wojtaszek with the black pieces. What do you do? Well, you play the Dutch!

VO 21.5 – A41
Radoslaw Wojtaszek
Magnus Carlsen
Wijk aan Zee 2015 (3)

1.d4 d6 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 f5 4.b4 ♗g7 5.♗b2 a5 6.b5 a4 7.e3 ♘f6 8.♗e2 c6 9.bxc6 bxc6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♕c2 ♕c7 12.♘c3 a3 13.♗c1 ♘bd7 14.♖b1 ♘e4 15.♘xe4 fxe4 16.♘d2 ♘f6 17.♖b3

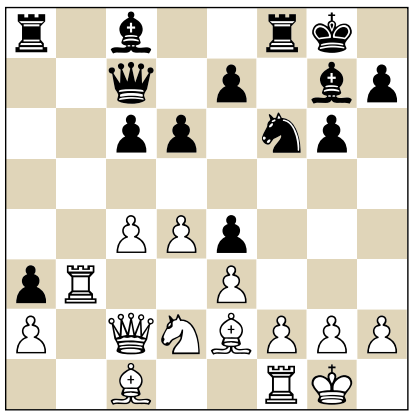
NEW IN CHESS

Radek Wojtaszek 'knows how to handle 2800 kids without a-pawns'.

FRED LUCAS

At the goodbye party Dutch IM Manuel Bosboom, who famously beat Kasparov in 1999, lived up to his blitz reputation by beating Levon Aronian and drawing with Magnus Carlsen.

Magnus has played the opening reasonably creatively, but what he has here is a doomed a-pawn. It will be a long time before White will promote the little soldier from a2, though, so there is still some hope to muddy the waters thanks to the black pieces' potential on the kingside.

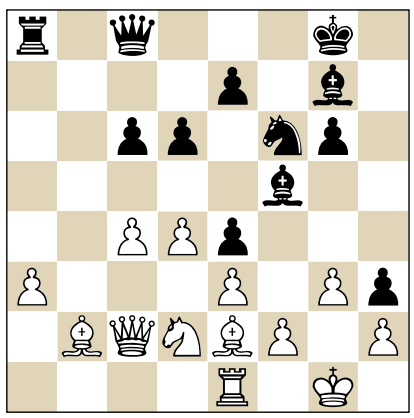


17...♗f5 18.♖xa3 h5 19.♖xa8 ♖xa8 20.a3 h4 Black doesn't have that many resources, but he is doing his best. Now White has to decide whether to allow ...h3 or not.

21.♗b2 21.h3!? could create a target after ...g5-g4.

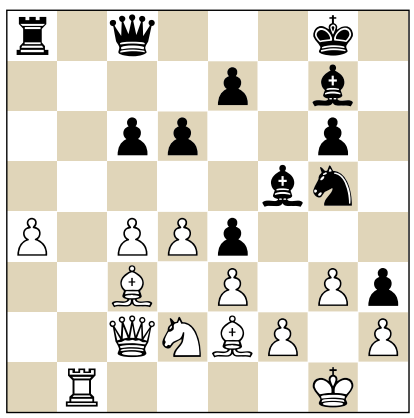
21...h3 Now at least Black will have some sort of a nail in White's kingside position. Maybe the queen will appear on g2 at some stage. Who knows, it's the World Champion, right?

22.g3 ♕c8 23.♖e1



23...♖b8?! This move looks completely pointless. It probably is, too. Instead, 23...♘h7! 24.a4 ♘g5 25.♖a1 ♗g4 would create some real counterplay. Basically, it would just be a better version of the game.

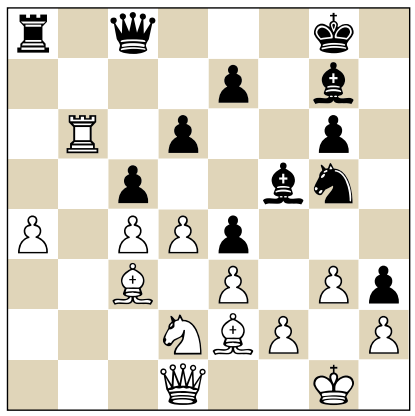
24.♗c3 ♘h7 25.a4 ♘g5 26.♖b1 ♖a8 Black has lost two tempi, but the practical chances remain. Right now he wants ...♗g4, using the light-square holes.



27.♕d1?! A prophylactic move, but now, exploiting the fact that the c3-bishop is left unprotected, Black is able to soften up White's centre. I would like to suggest an alternative, but to be honest I would also be concerned about ...♗g4. Probably 27.♗f1 ♗g4 28.♖b6 ♕f5 29.♖xc6 was the way for White, as after 29...♖f8, attacking f2, there is the lovely 30.f4!.

27...c5! When I saw this, I felt Magnus might escape after all.

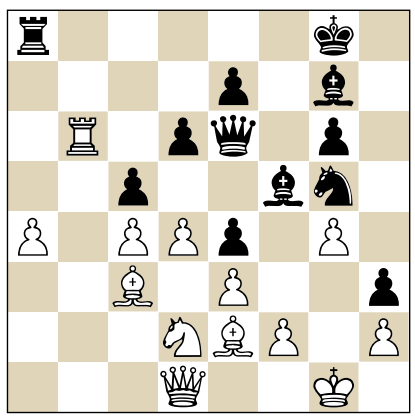
28.♖b6



28...♕e6?? Speculative. Magnus saw some attacking ideas, but those were illusions. White's next move is actually not all that clear, so it was a good moment for the just-in-case move 28...♔h7!, when somehow it is hard to suggest a move for White, as 29.a5? is met by 29...cxd4! and since the a5-pawn needs protection, the bishop cannot take back on d4, and after 30.exd4 e3! 31.fxe3 ♕e6! it is suddenly Black who is winning.

29.♕a1 is better, but after 29...♗g4 30.♗f1 cxd4 31.♗xd4 ♗xd4 32.exd4 e3! 33.fxe3 ♕f5 White has to bail out with 34.♕b1, giving up the a-pawn and trying to hold the draw.

29.g4!

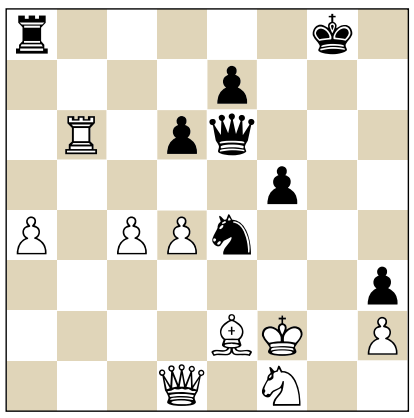


Cool-headed. At the end of the day, Black is left with too few pieces to attack.

29...cxd4 30.♗xd4 ♗xd4 31.exd4 e3 32.gxf5 gxf5 33.♘f1

33.fxe3 ♕xe3+ 34.♔h1 is also winning.

33...exf2+ 34.♔xf2 ♘e4+



35.♔e1! And the rest is a matter of being a little accurate. White is a piece up and his king is safe enough.

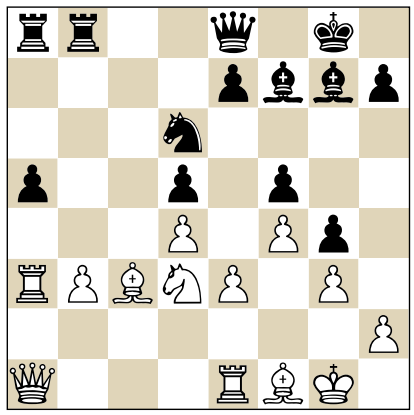
35...♕f6 36.♕d3 ♖xa4 37.♖b1 ♕h4+ 38.♘g3 ♔f7 39.♕f3 ♔g7 40.♕f4 ♕xf4 41.♘h5+ ♔f7 42.♘xf4 ♘g5 43.d5 ♔f6 44.♔f2 ♖a3 45.♗d3 ♖a2+ 46.♔g3 ♖a3 47.♖e1 ♘e4+ 48.♔f3 ♘g5+ 49.♔e3 ♖a2 50.♖e2 ♖a3 51.♖f2 ♘e4 52.♖f3 Black resigned.

This was not the only major victory of the talented player from Poland, who despite his 15th place in the world rankings is first and foremost known as a faithful second of Vishy Anand. Two rounds later, it was Caruana's turn to face Radek with Black. What do you do? Well, of course you play the Dutch!

HD 6.3 – A88
Radoslaw Wojtaszek
Fabiano Caruana
Wijk aan Zee 2015 (5)

1.d4 f5 2.c4 ♘f6 3.g3 g6 4.♗g2 ♗g7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.0-0 d6 7.♘c3 c6 8.♖e1 ♘a6 9.b3 ♘e4 10.♗b2 ♘xc3 11.♗xc3 ♘c5 12.♘g5 d5 13.♘h3 ♘e4 14.♗b2 ♗e6 15.♘f4 ♗f7 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.♘d3 a5 18.a4 b5 19.axb5 ♕b6 20.e3 ♖fb8 21.♗f1 ♕xb5 22.♖a3 ♕e8 23.f3 ♘d6 24.♕a1 g5 25.♗c3 g4 26.f4

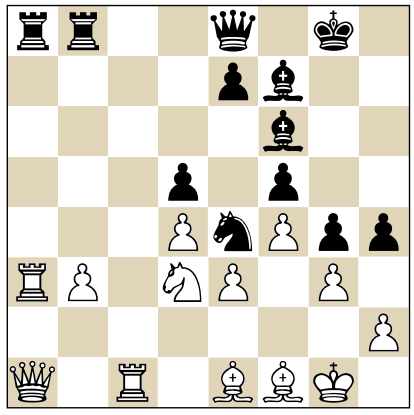
Another Dutch, and another a-pawn is doomed...



26...♘e4 27.♗xa5 h5

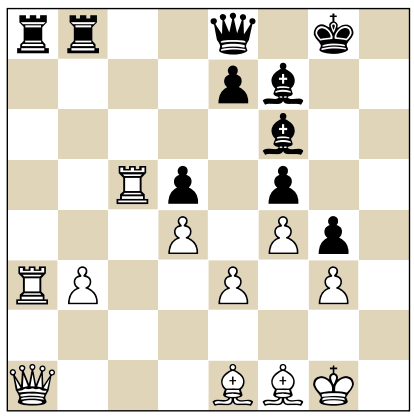
The only source of counterplay. Here Black's initiative is even less promising than in Wojtaszek-Carlsen. And by now Radek already knew how to handle 2800 kids without a-pawns.

28.♖c1 h4 29.♗e1 ♗f6



30.♘c5?! In view of what happened this seems to be an oversight.

30...hxg3 31.hxg3 ♘xc5 32.♖xc5



32...e5!

A nice tactical shot. Suddenly White has to worry about the f8-a3 diagonal.

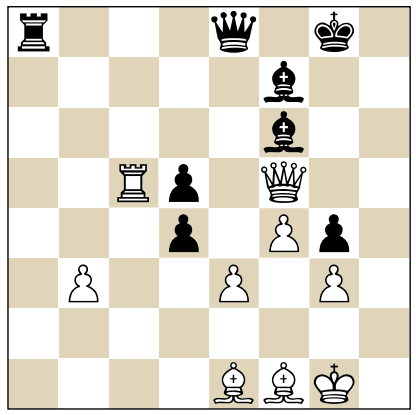
33.♖xa8

33.fxe5!? was tempting, just giving up the exchange. However, after 33...♖xa3 34.♕xa3 ♗e7 35.♕b2 ♗xc5 36.dxc5 the position is quite strange. White's bishops are pretty bad, so the assessment doesn't seem obvious to me. One might argue, though, that with so many pawns White doesn't really risk anything here.

33...♖xa8 34.♕b1 exd4

Taking the other way, 34...exf4 35.♕xf5 ♕xe3+ 36.♗f2 ♕e6 37.♕xf4, is clearly better for White, thanks to his extra pawn.

35.♕xf5

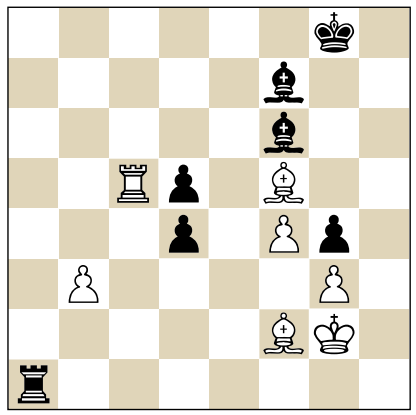


35...♕xe3+? It is quite remarkable, but it was better *not* to take the pawn! Black should have played 35...♕e6!, when White must take the queen, since the e3-pawn is actually hanging: 36.♕xe6 ♗xe6. Once again, the e3-pawn is hanging, and it's quite a concern. 37.♗f2 dxe3 38.♗xe3 d4 39.♗f2 ♗xb3, with utter equality.

36.♗f2 ♕e6 37.♗d3

37.♕b1! was the best move objectively, but Radek was probably just happy to keep the game under control.

37...♕xf5 38.♗xf5 ♖a1+ 39.♔g2



39...d3? There is no reason for this move, but Fabiano was most likely quite short on time. Best was 39...♖a3!. Now if White is to move the rook from the c-file, the black rook will enjoy the second rank quite a bit. The position is simply equal here. However, Black should not play the hasty 39...♖a2 in view of 40.♖c2!.

40.♗xd3 d4 41.b4

And without an extra d-pawn the game is probably already beyond saving.

41...♗b3 42.b5 ♗e7 43.♖h5 ♖d1 44.♗e2 ♖d2 45.♗xg4 ♖b2 46.♗f3 ♗b4 47.b6

Black resigned.

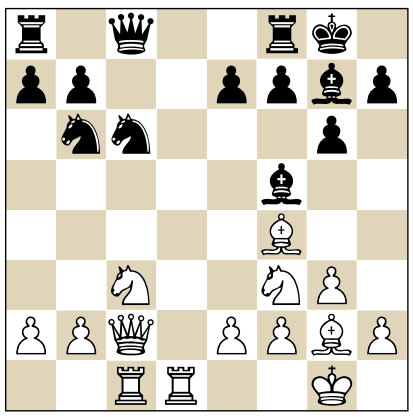
Back at Camp Carlsen, the situation was quite depressing: –1 after 3 games, with Fabiano Caruana on 2½/3 (yours truly being to be blamed for the half point missing there). What more would you *not* wish for? Fortunately for Magnus, and as so often in the past, good old Dutch legend Loek van Wely came to the rescue.

ALINA L'AMI

'Perhaps I could tell you about how Magnus Carlsen and Loek van Wely were rolling on the floor fighting for the ball during a basketball game.'

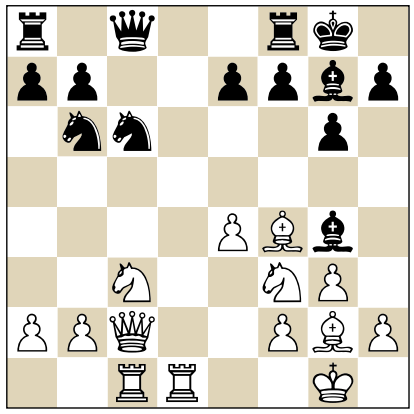
GI 1.14 – D76
Loek van Wely
Magnus Carlsen
Wijk aan Zee 2015 (4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.g3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♗g2 ♘b6 7.♘c3 ♘c6 8.0-0 0-0 9.d5 ♘a5 10.♕c2 c6 11.dxc6 ♘xc6 12.♖d1 ♗d7 13.♗f4 ♕c8 14.♖ac1 ♗f5



Loek was clearly not playing all that ambitiously in the opening, so Magnus felt that he might as well take some risks. Provoking e4 closes the g2-bishop and weakens the d4-square, but there are also some clear drawbacks to this idea.

15.e4 ♗g4



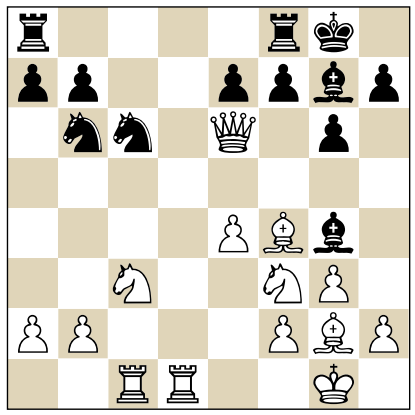
16.♕b3?

16.♘d5! would lead to a clear advantage for White. The logical line would be 16...♗xf3 17.♗xf3 ♘xd5 18.exd5 ♘d4 19.♕e4 ♘xf3+ 20.♕xf3 ♕f5, when Black seems to be alright. But it turns out that ...g5 is not a threat: 21.♖c7! g5 22.♕h5! and Black is in trouble. Not only did White not lose a piece, he is also attacking several pawns. Therefore, instead of the 'logical' 16...♗xf3, Black should play 16...e5! when White is only slightly better.

16...♕e6!

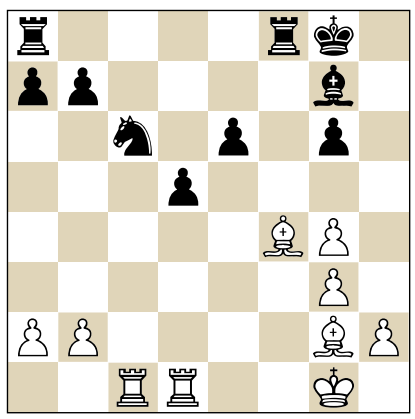
Missed by Loek number one.

17.♕xe6



17...fxe6! Missed by Loek number two. **18.e5** Suddenly this is the only move. **18...♘d5** Black is already facing a choice and the position has become very double-edged.

19.♘xd5 exd5 20.♘g5!? e6 21.f3 h6 22.fxg4 hxg5 23.♗xg5 ♘xe5 24.♗f4 ♘c6



This position is very unclear. Black has the centre, while White has two

bishops and some kingside pawns... The problem, though, was that Loek was in time-trouble. And probably not in the best of forms either.

25.g5?

Just blundering a pawn. After seeing this move I lost interest in this game. The rest was just downhill for White.

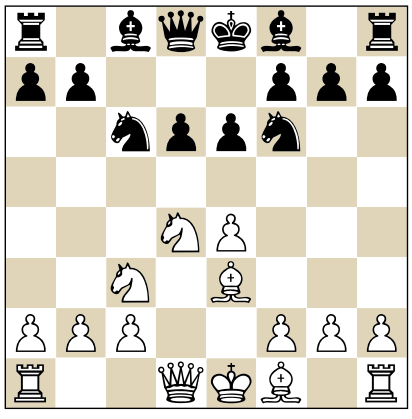
25...♗xb2 26.♖c2 ♗d4+ 27.♔h1 ♖ad8 28.♖b1 ♖f7 29.♗h3 ♖e8 30.♖e2 e5 31.♖b5 ♖ef8 32.♗e6 exf4 33.♖xb7 f3 34.♖d2 ♔g7 35.♗xf7 ♖xf7 36.♖xf7+ ♔xf7 37.♖d3 f2 38.♔g2 ♔e6 39.h4 ♗b6 40.♖f3 ♘e5 41.♖f6+ ♔e7 42.a4 ♗d4 43.g4 ♘xg4 44.♖f4 ♘h2 White resigned.

As Magnus confessed during the relaxed Tata Steel management evening, Loek was a big source of inspiration for him. And the Dutchman probably had the same effect on Vassily Ivanchuk, who seemed to rise from the ashes and took an early lead.

SI 25.9 – B80
Vassily Ivanchuk
Loek van Wely
Wijk aan Zee 2015 (3)

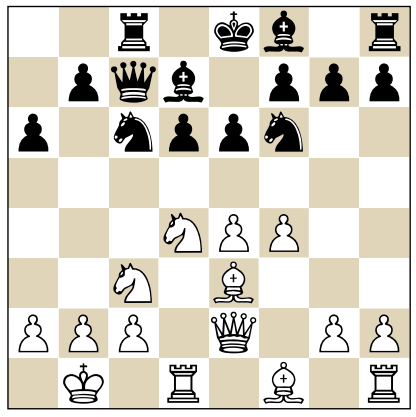
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗e3 ♘f6

Recently Loek has been playing this variation quite a lot. He likes playing with fire.



7.♕e2!? Not the most standard move, but not a new concept either. The queen is known to be placed reasonably well here, too. It supports the g2-g4 advance.

7...a6 8.0-0-0 ♗d7 9.f4 ♖c8 10.♔b1 ♕c7



I feel Black has played a little clumsily. If you put the queen on c7, then why did you put the rook on c8? But obviously it is not that simple. There is always an explanation behind every opening disaster. Loek was probably intending 10...♘a5, followed by ...♖xc3, but then noticed that 11.e4-e5 is a big blow.

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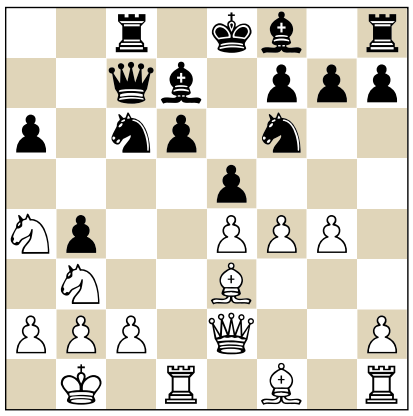
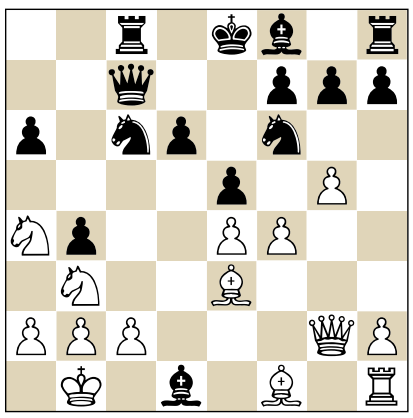
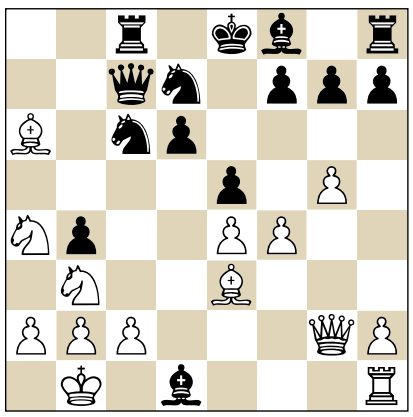
11.♘b3 b5 12.g4 b4 13.♘a4 e5
Fishing for complications, because otherwise Black will just be steamrolled.



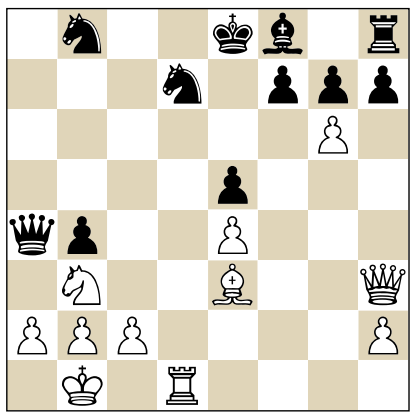
14.g5 ♗g4 15.♕g2! ♗xd1



16.♗xa6!
White is a rook down at the moment, but Black is going to lose quite some material very soon. And he still hasn't finished his development.
16.gxf6? was bad because of 16...♘d4!.
16...♘d7

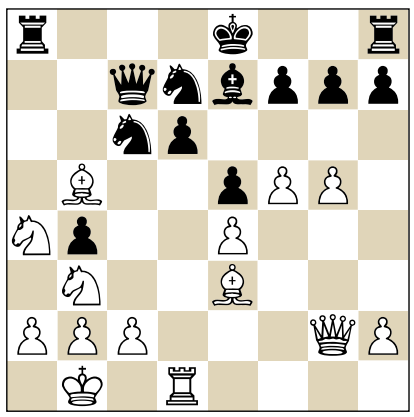


17.♖xd1
17.♗xc8 would have done for a simple guy like me: 17...♕xc8 18.♖xd1 ♕a6 19.♕h3!! ♘cb8 (19...♕xa4 20.♕xd7+! ♔xd7 21.♘c5+) 20.g6 ♕xa4 21.fxe5 dxe5



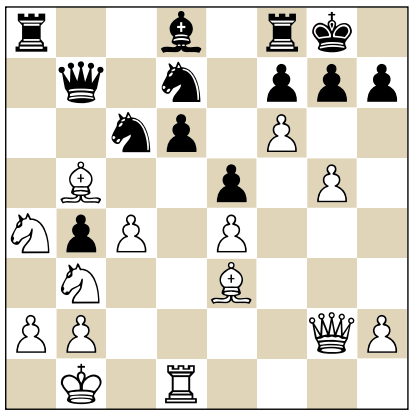
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

22.♕xh7!!.
17...♖a8 18.♗b5 ♗e7 19.f5
White has more than enough compensation for the exchange. He basically dominates the board. The pawns on the kingside are quite intimidating.

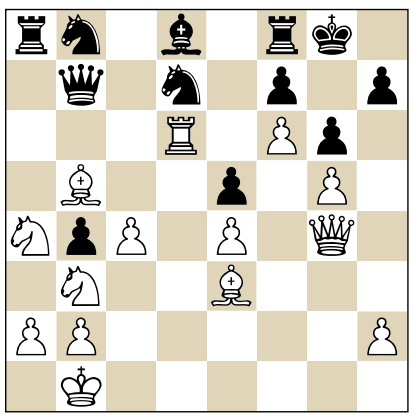


19...♕b7
19...0-0! was the only way: 20.f6 ♖fb8! and Black is still in the game.
20.c4 0-0 21.f6 ♗d8

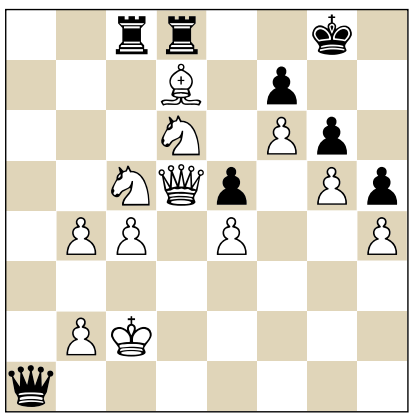
'Magnus followed up his win against "Loeky" with five more victories. His victims included last year's winner Levon Aronian and the world's number two, Fabiano Caruana.'



22.♖xd6 This hurts. The rest was just punching a man who is tied up.
22...♘cb8 23.♕g4 g6



24.h4 Slightly more efficient was 24.♗xd7!. **24...h5 25.♕f3 ♗c7 26.♖xd7 ♘xd7 27.♗xd7 ♖ad8 28.♘bc5 ♕a8 29.♕d1 ♕a7 30.♕d5 ♖a8 31.♗d2 ♖fd8 32.♗xb4 ♗a5 33.a3 ♕c7 34.♘c3 ♗xb4 35.axb4 ♕a7 36.♔c2 ♖ac8 37.♘b5 ♕a1 38.♘d6**



Black resigned.

Magnus followed up his win against 'Loeky' with five more victories. His victims included two of his main rivals, last year's winner Levon Aronian and the world's number two, Fabiano Caruana.

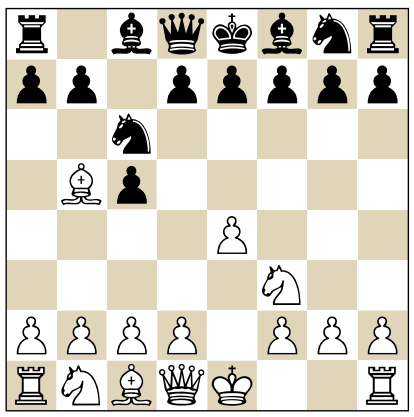
Here is Magnus's win against Caruana, annotated by the Norwegian's second Peter Heine Nielsen (from Denmark).

NOTES BY
Peter Heine Nielsen

SI 31.7 – B31
Fabiano Caruana
Magnus Carlsen
Wijk aan Zee 2015 (6)

This game was played in the sixth round, with both players being on 3/5. However, their routes had been quite different. Magnus had a bumpy start followed by two wins, while Caruana had started off with 2½/3, only to find out, like Carlsen, that playing the Dutch against Wojtaszek is probably not a good idea.
But, of course, apart from the impact on the tournament standings, this is a game between the two top players in the world.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5!?

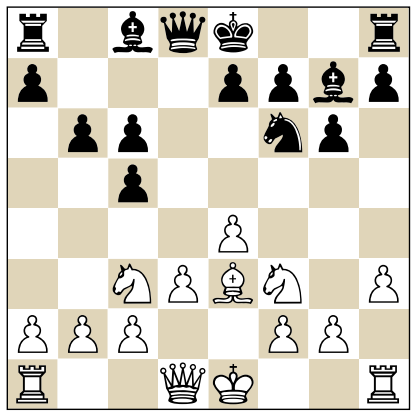


These days one would almost say that this is the main line against the Sicilian, which it has been since the World Championship match between Anand and Gelfand in Moscow 2012, but in their previous encounter Caruana played 3.d4 and got a promising position after 3...cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.c4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 d6 7.f3!?. Even so, this fascinating game ended in a draw.

3...g6

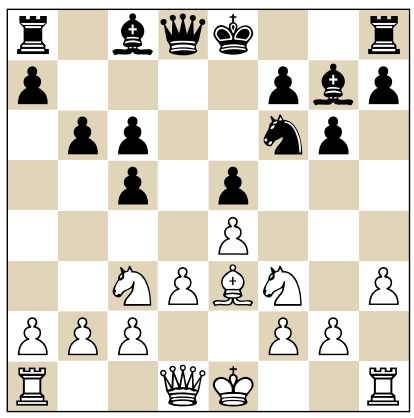
Gelfand repeatedly played 3...e6, but since the match he has, for example, lost to Caruana, and Black seems to be moderately suffering in this variation from a theoretical standpoint.

4.♗xc6 dxc6 5.d3 ♗g7 6.h3 ♘f6 7.♘c3 b6 8.♗e3



8...e5?!

Standard moves like 8...♘d7 and 8...0-0 are better. Magnus's move, while positionally justified, has a tactical flaw.

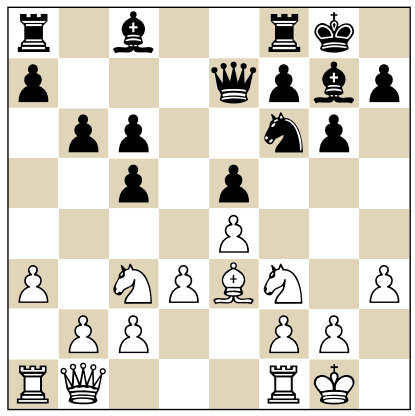


9.0-0?!

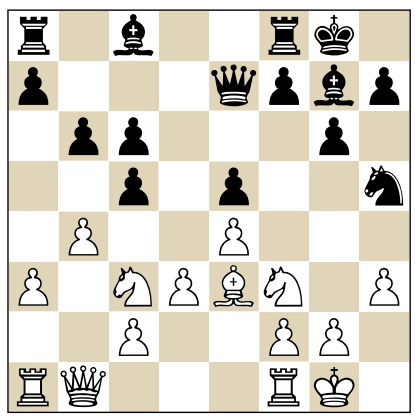
After 9.♘xe5! ♘xe4, 10.♕f3! is the point, as now 10...♘d6 is impossible because Black has played ...b6, so c6 is hanging.
Caruana thought for a while before playing 9.0-0. Maybe he was calculating the line 10...f5 (instead of 10...♘d6) 11.♗f4 ♕e7 12.dxe4 ♗xe5 13.0-0-0 0-0 14.♗xe5 ♕xe5 15.exf5 ♗xf5 16.♕xc6 ♕f4+, when it looks as if Black gets back the pawn with a decent position, but after 17.♖d2! the rook protects f2, and there is no way to exploit the pin on the d-file.

9...0-0 10.a3 ♕e7 11.♕b1!?

Caruana takes his role as challenger to Magnus's supremacy seriously and plays very ambitiously. White's pawn-push b4 will indeed put pressure on the black queenside, but the queen strays far from its king.

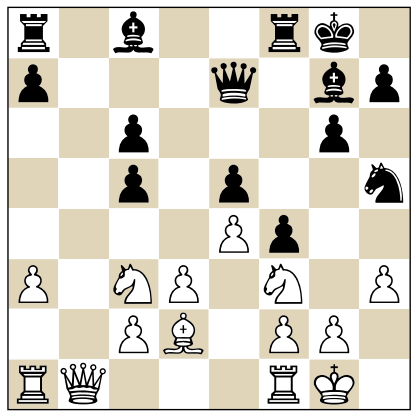


11...♘h5 12.b4



12...f5!? Not at all the top move of the computer, but an interesting and principled one.
The engines like 12...♘f4, possibly followed by 13...g5. This is a relevant idea for Black, but maybe White can fight for the initiative with 13.bxc5 bxc5 14.♗xf4!? exf4 15.e5!? with a very interesting position.

13.bxc5 f4 14.♗d2 bxc5



Black's strategy is risky and very similar to a King's Indian. The doubled pawns on the c-file are not only weak but probably just lost. After 15.♘a4, for example, things look problematic:

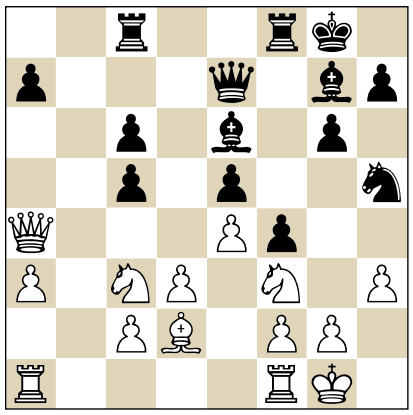
15...g5 even allows 16.♘xc5!? and if Black takes back on c5 then 17.♗b4, followed by 18.♗xf8 and 19.♘xg5, is better for White.

But Black can just ignore the pawn with 16...g4! 17.hxg4 ♗xg4 18.♘h2 ♗c8!, stopping ♕b7, with a very promising attack for Black. White's extra pawn is of no immediate relevance, and when a black rook appears on the g-file the white king is in serious danger.

15.♕b3+ ♗e6 16.♕a4

Caruana comes up with an interesting concept. He disturbs the black queenside, gaining time, because since it is possible to sacrifice the c5-pawn, losing c6 is an entirely different matter, as this would give White's knight access to d5.

16...♖ac8



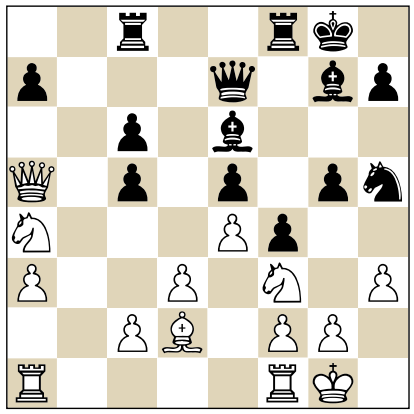
17.♕a5

17.♕a6!? also makes sense: 17...g5 18.♖fb1 g4 (18...♖c7 seems too slow, as after 19.♘a4 g4 20.hxg4 ♗xg4 21.♗a5 ♗xf3 22.gxf3 ♕g5+ 23.♔f1 ♘g3+ 24.♔e1! White would escape just in time) 19.♖b7 ♕f6, and despite White's invasion on the 7th rank, Blacks counterplay seems enough – the position after 20.hxg4 ♗xg4 21.♘h2 (21.♔f1 ♘g3+!) 21...♗e6 is immensely complex, but I would say Black has the better practical chances.

17...g5 18.♘a4

Black's queenside is collapsing, and Caruana has arranged it in such a way that his queen will be able to take on c5, gaining time, since Black obviously can't allow a queen swap.

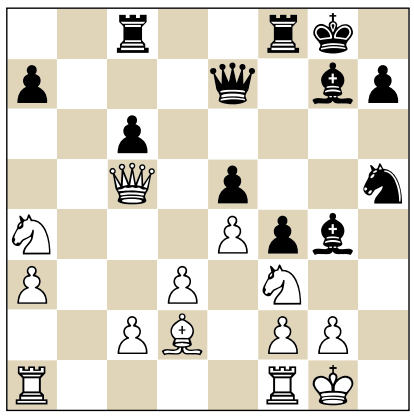
Even so, Black's initiative is serious, as the white queen, while active on c5, is still cut off from what Carlsen seems to think is the most important factor: the vulnerable white king.



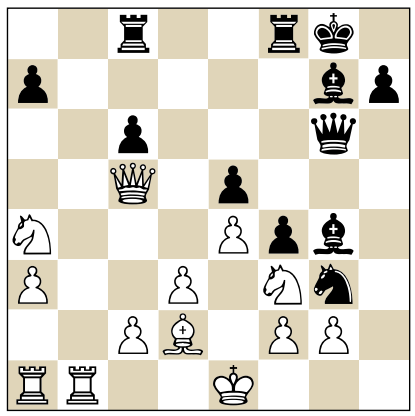
18...g4 19.hxg4

19.♕xc5 ♕f6 will just transpose.

19...♗xg4 20.♕xc5



20...♕f6 A very interesting position, and critical for the outcome of the game. It is very tempting for White to try and escape with his king to the queenside. 21.♖fb1 seems the most logical move, when after the direct 21...♗xf3 22.gxf3 ♕g6+ 23.♔f1 ♘g3+, 24.♔e1! is a very typical idea, when the black attack seems to peter out. More promising is 21...♕g6!? when 22.♔f1 ♘g3+! 23.♔e1 (23.fxg3 fxg3, and Black's attack is just too strong), and now 23...♘xe4 24.♕c4+ ♗e6 25.♕xe4 ♗f5 26.♕c4+ ♗e6 is a computer line ending in a perpetual. But much more dramatic is



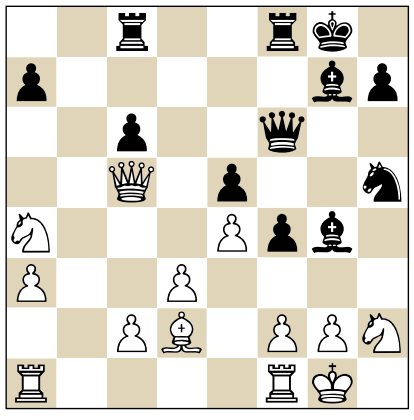
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

23...♕h5!? 24.♗b4 ♕h1+ 25.♔d2 ♕xg2 26.♘xe5 ♗xe5 27.♕xe5 ♕xf2+ 28.♔c3 ♘e2+ 29.♔c4, when the white king may have reached safety, or may be in trouble after 29...c5!?.

Another fierce clash between the numbers 2 and 1 in the world resulted in an impressive victory for the top-seed.

Very interesting and fun chess indeed. But maybe Magnus would have kept it sane and would have just played 21...♖f7. This is also a good reply after 21.♖fe1, with serious compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

21.♘h2

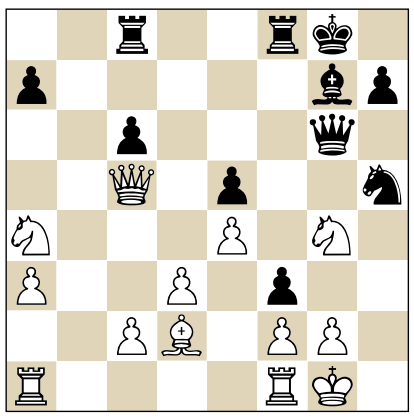


21...f3!?

Very direct, but 21...♕g6 also deserved attention, with the idea of continuing in King's Indian fashion after 22.f3 ♗h3 23.♖f2 ♖f7, with 24...♗f8 and 25...♖g7 to come. White can try and interfere with 24.♗c3, but then Black quietly defends with 24...♖e8 and is ready for a regrouping. And again, while the position is complex, practically speaking it seems more pleasant for Black.

Similarly, 21...♕h4 also deserves attention, in order to bring the black rook to the kingside via f6 in time.

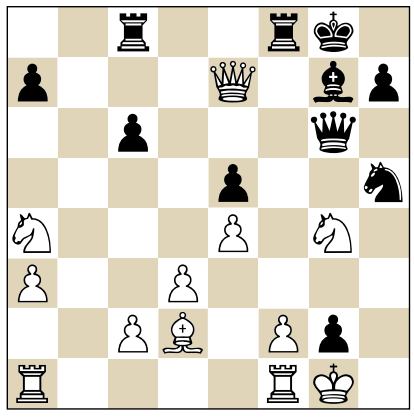
22.♘xg4 ♕g6



Carlsen's idea looks almost decisive. If Caruana tried to hang on to his extra piece with 23.♘e3, 23...♘f4! would win instantly for Black.

But Caruana exploits the drawback of ...f3, viz. that the white queen can now suddenly take part in the defence:

23.♕e7! fxg2



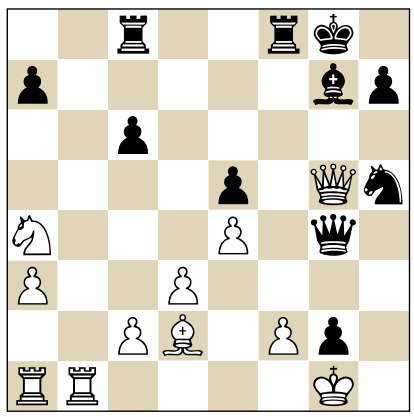
24.♖fb1?!

A logical move, as later on ♖b7! can be relevant. However, better would have been 24.♖fe1!? as after 24...♕xg4 25.♕g5 ♕xg5 26.♗xg5 ♘f4, 27.♖e3!? is now available, when White defends and the position seems balanced. However, 25...♕h3 26.♕xg2 ♕e6 is possible, when ...♖f6-g6 or ...♔h8/...♖g8 will start an attack on the g-file, with the usual assessment: unclear, but promising for Black, as the pressure is very much on White.

24...♕xg4 25.♕g5 ♕e2

Here 25...♕h3? is much less efficient because of 26.♕xg2 ♕e6 27.♖b7! – it seems that Black is in trouble, but only due to a line that would be almost impossible to find in the actual game: 27...♖f6 28.♘c5! ♕d6 29.♔h1! (preparing ♖g1) 29...♕xc5 30.♖g1 ♕f8 31.♕g4, and Black has no real defence.

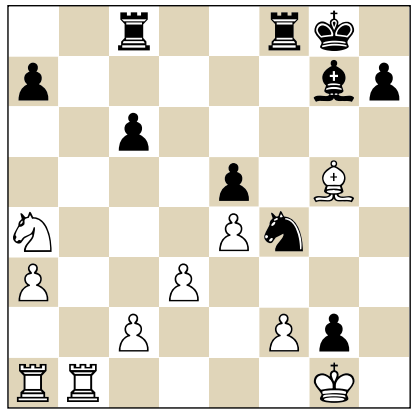
26.♕e3 ♕g4 27.♕g5



27...♕xg5!?

From a tournament perspective, a draw with Black against Caruana would not be a bad result, but this move is simply played on its objective merits. While White probably should be able to defend, it is Black who has the initiative, even after the queens have been exchanged.

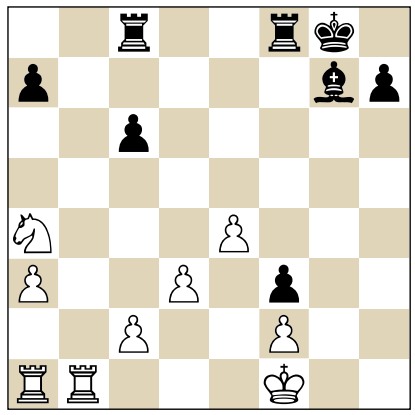
28.♗xg5 ♘f4



29.♗xf4?

A losing blunder. Caruana should have defended with 29.♔h2!? when Magnus thought that 29...♗f6 30.♗h6 ♗g7 would force a repetition. Interesting would be 29...h6 30.♗h4 h5, as now 31.♗g5 ♗f6 32.♗h6 ♖f7 leaves the bishop on h6 in trouble. However, 31.f3!?, intending to put the bishop back on f2 if necessary, looks reasonable for White, even if the computer can easily overestimate the importance of the black kingside pawns.

29...exf4 30.♔xg2 f3+ 31.♔f1

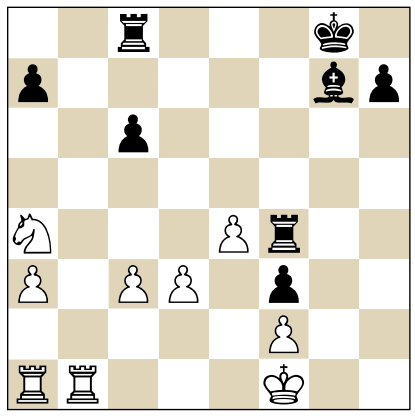


31...♖f4!!

An excellent move, highlighting the difference between 29.♗xf4 being a decent exchange sacrifice or a losing blunder. The white king is now simply trapped, the point being that after 32.♔e1 ♖d8! 33.♔d2 is impossible due to 33...♖xe4, so the white king is just stopped short of escaping to the

queenside. Now 34.♘c3 almost looks good enough, but 34...♗h6+! mates. Caruana used up basically all his remaining time and played the last moves on his increments. But his position was beyond salvation.

32.c3



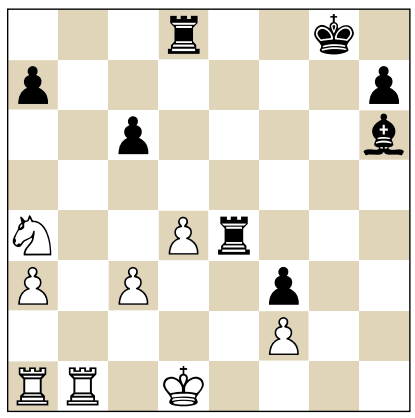
32...♖d8!

Again Magnus finds the killing move. If now 33.♖d1 then 33...♖h4 34.♔e1 ♗h6 mates. White's king is trapped and there is no defence against the threat of ...♖h4 and ...♗h6, mating.

33.d4 ♗h6

Certainly winning, and Magnus had seen 35...c5 at this point. Even so, 33...♗xd4!! would have been a nice way to finish the game, as 34.cxd4 ♖h4 forces mate. The point is 35.♔g1 ♔h8!, and 35.♔e1 ♖xd4 leaves White only with meaningless checks to postpone the inevitable mate.

34.♔e1 ♖xe4+ 35.♔d1

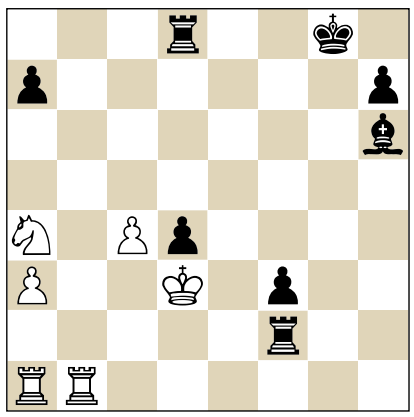


35...c5!

Without this the black win would not be trivial. As 36.♘xc5 ♖e2 now wins instantly, since ♖b2 is no longer available, White loses an extra pawn. And, even worse, Magnus also gets to the second rank with force.

> 'Ivanchuk lost with White against Wesley So, in a theoretical line that I analysed in great detail in New In Chess. Where? Yes, right.'

36.♔c2 cxd4 37.♔d3 ♖e2 38.c4 ♖xf2



39.♖d1?! The last chance was 39.♖b2, but 39...♖xb2 40.♘xb2 ♖b8 is still completely winning for Black.

39...♖e2 And as ...♖e3+ and ...d3 will follow next, the black passed pawns will decide. So Caruana resigned.

■ ■ ■

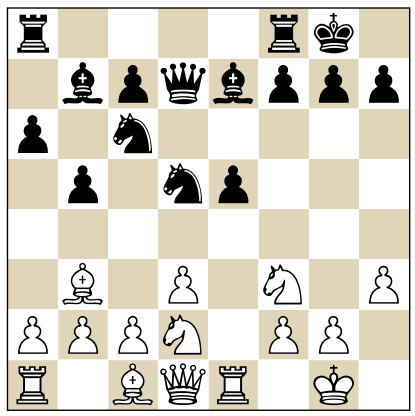
Once Carlsen started winning, Ivanchuk stopped doing so and at some point he even lost with White against Wesley So, in a theoretical line that I analysed in great detail when annotating the game Anand-Aronian (1-0) from the 2014 Candidates' tournament in Khanty-Mansiysk. Annotated where? Yes, right. New In Chess, issue 2014/3. Maybe you have heard of that magazine.

RL 17.2 – C88
Vassily Ivanchuk
Wesley So
Wijk aan Zee 2015 (8)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6

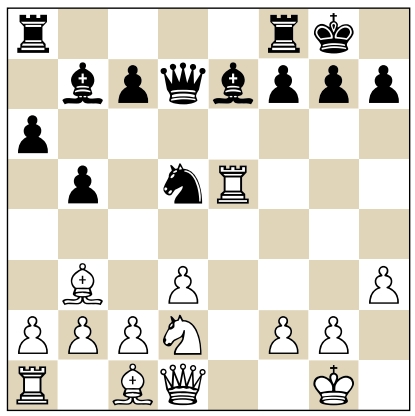
Ivanchuk must have expected Wesley to play the Berlin, because what follows is really inexplicable.

4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 0-0 8.h3 ♗b7 9.d3 d5 10.exd5 ♘xd5 11.♘bd2 ♕d7



12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♖xe5

So far we have been following the afore-said game Anand-Aronian, the notes to which, including the following knight sacrifice, you can find in the afore-said issue of New In Chess. It all starts on page 22. OK, if you don't like reading what I write, you don't have to, but excuse me, in the meantime there had already been two games with the knight move I suggested there.



13...♘f4!

And even if you don't like Jan Gustafsson (though why would you not like him; the guy is so cool), you have to pay some attention to his games in the Marshall.

In the game against Anand, 13...♘f6 was the choice of Levon, who according to Wesley fired his seconds after they had failed to find 13...♘f4. I wonder if that's true, because it would explain a lot.

continued on page 32

ALINA L'AMI

After Vassily Ivanchuk had resolutely stopped him from showing anything on the chessboard, Magnus Carlsen shared his great knowledge and passion for the game in the commentary room.

Interview Magnus Carlsen

'I follow almost anything. I like the game both as a player and as a fan.'

Magnus Carlsen's hopes to fight for a seventh consecutive win and do 'a Caruana' were effectively thwarted when in the tenth round in The Hague, Vassily Ivanchuk showed no ambition whatsoever and used the white pieces to steer for a lifeless draw. The initial disappointment about this non-game quickly subsided when the World Champion joined **Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam** in the commentary room in a buoyant mood, ready to talk about anything with great wit and heart-warming candour.

It felt like a real damper. Barely had the round started, or the key game of the day had ended in an insipid draw. Once again Vassily Ivanchuk had shown that there is only one person who tells him what to do and that person is he himself. When the result appeared on our screen in the commentary room, Dutch GM John van der Wiel and I were briefly speechless. Just like the spectators online and in The Hague we felt robbed. But not only were we not going to be excited about Magnus Carlsen's chances to stretch his winning streak to seven, this surely also ruined our chances of having the World Champion in the show. Unlike the other grandmasters,

Carlsen had not come to The Hague by bus, but by private car and with no reason to stay, he had most likely already left the building,

And then he walks in, with big energetic strides. Magnus Carlsen. As if he wants to get rid of some of the energy he had planned to invest in his game against Ivanchuk. As he sits down in John's chair, his first conclusion is factual: 'He just forced a draw. He's allowed to do that. There's just nothing I can do.' True, but was this a scenario he could have imagined? 'He sometimes does that.' And then: 'He's one and a half points behind me in the tournament, so…' A good moment to play for a win? 'Yeah. He's an inscrutable fellow.' The audience laughs and so does Magnus, who then explains that if you want to play something in which White cannot force a draw you have to play flank openings. 'That's what I did for the first few rounds and look what it got me (1 out of 3 –ed.). Now I felt like I should play something sensible.'

Then he earns another round of laughter as he drops the diplomatic language: 'I'm a chess player. I like to play chess, and this is not chess. This is just nonsense!'

But this nonsense stopped him from playing for a seventh win. 'I'm not so concerned about that streak anyway.' Really? 'No.' And with a telling grin: 'Not anymore.'

Enough said about the Ivanchuk game; he prefers to have a look at the games. As if he wants to entertain the audience he gives his views on the openings and shares fascinating insights. About the move 8.h4 in the game between Ding Liren and Wesley So, he says that it is a move of Botvinnik's and a very interesting one. When I suggest that this warrants the soundness of the move, he gives a sample of his enormous grasp of chess history: 'Botvinnik was a surprisingly creative player, especially in opening analysis. He had very creative ideas. This is one. It's funny that these ideas have survived into the modern age.' He adds that he knows that So has studied the Queen's Gambit very seriously and that both players probably know what they are doing in this wild position.

At some point Magnus says that he doesn't know what is going on, which reminds me of his remark about his game against Radjabov in the previous round. That he didn't understand the position, a remarkable observation from a player of his calibre.

'I realized at some point that people don't like to hear that. A couple of my friends were here for a couple of days and we played some different video games. One of them was winning all the time and was complaining all the time as well, which was extremely annoying. I guess when I'm winning every game and still complaining about my play people don't want to hear that. From now on, no more.'

'I don't know much about art, so I tried to ask the questions I think a kid would ask, like how many cows are there in the painting.'

But you were not whinging, you were serious.

'I was serious. I didn't understand what was going on. For instance, when he played 19…c5, I was like, wow, I didn't see that one coming. (..) I thought I was just restricting his light-squared bishop and that was the theme of the day. But as I delved deeper, I realised that I didn't understand what was going on.'

Turning to today's game between Vachier-Lagrave and Wojtaszek, he explains that Black improves on the famous game Grischuk-Aronian from Norway Chess last year and doesn't forget to show how in that game Black suddenly lost his queen in broad daylight. He expects that the spectators still think that Black's position looks a bit cramped but explains: 'This is modern chess. Even so there is some logic to the moves.'

After he has taken a quick look at all the games, I ask if a brief game like today's interrupts his tournament rhythm.

'I don't know. Today not playing a real game and a free day tomorrow, that's two days without playing. So that's not ideal. It's very individual. Some people need a rest, some people need to stay in the rhythm. For instance, I very much felt that I needed the last rest day and then during the rest day I got very restless. I had all of this energy that I couldn't use.'

Knowing that art is not a priority in his life, I suggest that with an empty afternoon ahead of him he might go back to the Mauritshuis museum, where prior to the round the players posed in front of Vermeer's *Girl with the Pearl* and Potter's *The Bull*. Unfazed he replies: 'Maybe. It was fun to be at the museum. I don't know much about art, so I tried to ask the questions I think a kid would ask, like how many cows are there in the painting. That was the first thing I thought about, but they couldn't give me the answer. I thought, that's a question no one's asked.'

In response I tell an anecdote about a lady who exclaimed at an exhibition: 'I may not know much about art, but I sure know what I like'. To which the painter James Whistler replied: 'Yes ma'am, so does a cow.' Not betting an eyelid, Magnus retorts: 'It's like what they say in chess: I don't know much about chess, but I can tell who's winning.'

After this brief cultural interval, it is time to look at the games again and

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Magnus Carlsen explains to Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam what is going on in the game Ding Liren-Wesley So, that started with a sharp line that was first investigated by Mikhail Botvinnik in the early 1960s.

ask for his views on his colleagues, which he readily shares, for instance on the ever-creative Baadur Jobava. 'He's a good player. That's what I found out playing against him. He made some strange moves, to say the least, at the beginning, but after that he started to play very decently. (..)

'He has lots of good ideas. It's just that sometimes, I guess, they don't work and still he thinks ah, I'll play it anyway!'

Or on Fabiano Caruana, who was seen as his biggest rival before the tournament. 'It's funny. After three rounds I was worried about being 1½ points behind him. So that changed pretty quickly! He doesn't seem to be in his best form. (..) I don't think we should consider it a norm that he scores +7 in every tournament. Over the last years he's had his ups and downs. He's a very good player. Even now it feels he's having at best a mediocre tournament and he's still on +1 and could fight for one of the highest places.'

A question from a viewer arrives, asking where Carlsen can still improve. I ask him the same about Caruana. 'I don't want to give him any tips (with a smile). I don't know. Like everyone he can sometimes misjudge a position, he can miss stuff tactically. It's sort of the same with me, I don't understand everything that's going on, but I try.'

Is that the great thing about chess. You're so good and you run into things you don't understand?

'Exactly. It was fun against Aronian that I felt that I was learning quite a bit about the line we were playing during the game. That was, wow, I'm starting to understand these things. It's not always so easy in preparation because you don't go that deeply, but during the game it quite often happens that suddenly I understand this position better.'

Did you ever feel, like Capablanca, that you understand everything?

'No, not even close. Well, maybe a little bit, but then you soon get a wake-up call. Then you get completely outplayed in one game and you get back to earth.'

Obviously he follows his direct competitors, but does he also closely follow the young kids? 'Yeah, I'm following the Challengers group. Of course. (..) Wei Yi is playing brilliantly, and Navara is obviously a good player. I think Wei Yi has 2675 and I think that is exactly what I had at his age. And then you can talk about inflation and so on (another smile). I won't do that. Yes, he is a spectacular talent. It's hard to tell still whether he'll be just a world class player or one of the best, but he's really good and he's a well-rounded player, not just a tactician.'

China already won the Olympiad; can they take over?

'I think they're already very good. They have been for many years, but they're still struggling to find that one guy who will be one of the very best. But I think India has more players than China, especially at the youth level, so I think right now it's probably more likely that India will dominate rather than China.'

Tal was known for being interested in games at any level. How far do you go down the rating list for the players you follow?

'I follow almost anything. I like the game both as a player and as a fan.'

And computer versus computer games?

(Hesitates) 'If I'm really bored.'

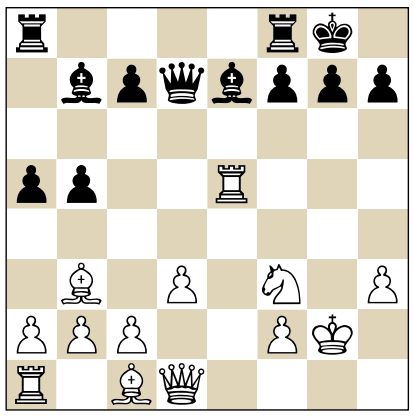
It's time to have a final look at the positions. He looks at Giri's game against Saric and thinks that 'Black should be fine in some way'. And indeed, the Dutchman would even win. The position in Ding-So reminds him of a study in which the sacrifice of lots of pieces ends in stalemate. He suspects So is still in his preparation and this will be confirmed, too. Is he impressed by So's recent good results?

'I think he's not one of the very best yet and he still needs to get more experience. But you can get far even at this level with a very good tactical eye and excellent preparation. (..) I don't know if he would be quite as comfortable playing more of the old guys like Vishy and Kramnik. But by all means his result here speaks for itself.'

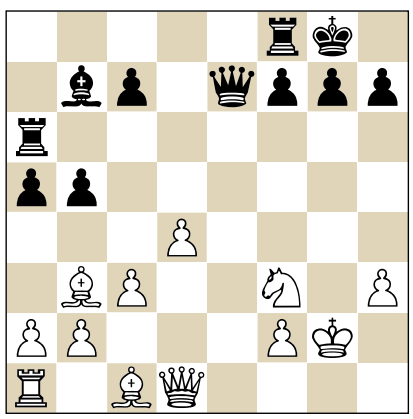
We've talked for more than half an hour and it's clear that the moment has come for him to leave. He answers a final question from the audience about the game against Ivanchuk, patiently and with the dignity of a champion. 'He sometimes does this. (..) Obviously, if I had known this, I might have tried something different, but it's not like it's a terrible result for me.' ■

continued from page 27

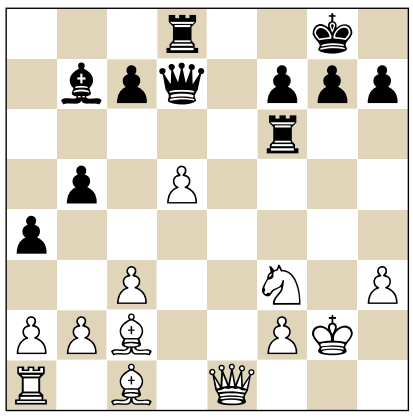
14.♘f3 ♘xg2 15.♔xg2 a5
Ivanchuk seemed shocked here, but we are still following my annotations and the games Guliev-Gustafsson and Jolly-Gozzoli (this game was actually played even earlier).



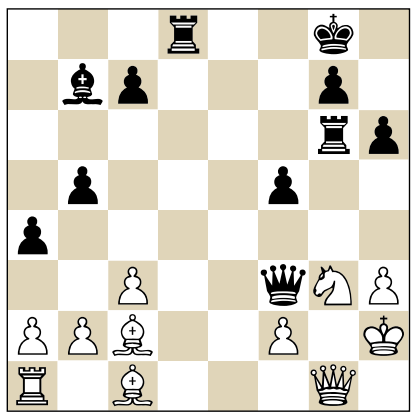
16.♖xe7?! Panic. **16...♕xe7 17.c3?** 17.a4!? looked like a better option. **17...♖a6 18.d4**



18...♖f6!?
This one impressed me. I would have forced matters with 18...♖g6+ 19.♔f1 ♕d7 20.♘g5 h6, when Black should be able to win.
19.d5 a4 20.♗c2 ♖d8 21.♕e1 ♕d7 Wesley plays it in a very sophisticated way. White is actually still in trouble. But 21...♕d6! would have been stronger.



22.♘g5 22.♕e4 would keep the game going. There may follow 22...♕xd5 23.♕xd5 ♗xd5 24.♗d1, although, let's be honest, with his pieces so tied up and the material already equal, White is probably not going to survive.
22...h6! 23.♘e4 ♖g6+ 24.♔h2 f5 25.♘g3 ♕xd5 26.♕g1 ♕f3



And as now 27.♗e3 is nicely met by 27...♕xe3!! 28.fxe3 ♖d2+, White resigned. A free point for Wesley.

Good to know that at least somebody is reading my articles. Wesley So, professional.

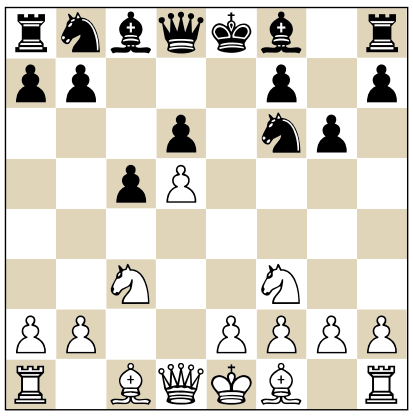
Wesley, as you might have figured out by now, also had a pretty decent tournament. Holding Carlsen, profiting from mistakes by people like Aronian, who usually don't make all that many mistakes…

With the following fine effort in the last round he secured shared second place.

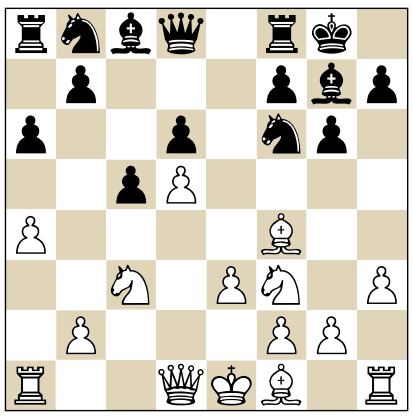
NOTES BY
Wesley So

BI 12.11 – A61
Wesley So
Loek van Wely
Wijk aan Zee 2015 (13)

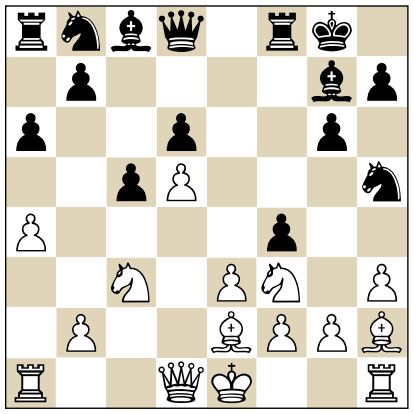
I look forward to getting invited in Wijk aan Zee again next year. The tournament has had such a long and prestigious tradition that being in a small and windy town for almost 20 days is totally worth it.
Going into the last round after coming from a loss against Anish Giri was tough, but losses are inevitable, so I told myself never to give up. Loek was also having a relatively unstable tournament, and in the final round anything can happen.
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5
A surprise. I don't recall Loek having played the Benoni recently.
4.d5 d6 5.♘c3 exd5 6.cxd5 g6



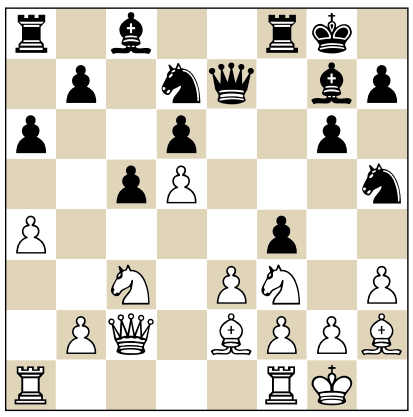
7.♗f4 a6 Alternatively, 7...♗g7 8.♕a4+ ♗d7 9.♕b3 occurred in a game of mine against John Bryant at the North American Open a month earlier. I suppose my opponent's prep was based upon that game.
8.a4 ♗g7 9.h3 The text restricts Black's options, and here Loek started thinking. 9.e3 gives Black the extra option of 9...♘h5.
9...0-0 10.e3



10...♘h5
The most direct plan, but it simply does not work well. Black's undeveloped pieces on the queenside means that his early offensive is bound to fail.
Recent games show that after 10...♖e8 11.♘d2 White is also slightly better.
11.♗h2 f5 12.♗e2 The most natural square for White's bishop.
12...f4



13.♕d2 A slight inaccuracy, as I had forgotten my opening preparation. Simply much better for White is 13.0-0 ♕e7 (13...fxe3 14.fxe3 ♕e7 15.♕d3 ♗h6 16.♘e4 ♗f5 17.♘fd2 is also very good for White) 14.♕c2 ♘d7 (White is also better after 14...fxe3 15.fxe3 ♕xe3+ 16.♔h1 ♗f5 17.♕d2 ♖e8 18.♖ae1)

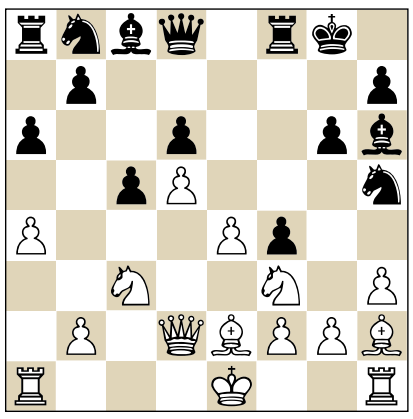


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

15.♕e4! ♘e5 16.♘xe5 ♗xe5 17.♗xh5 ♗f5 18.♕f3 gxh5 19.♗xf4 ♗g6 20.♕g3 ♗xf4 21.exf4 h4 22.♕g4.

13...♗h6 The main idea after 13...fxe3 was 14.♕xe3 ♖e8 15.♕d2 ♕e7 16.0-0 ♗xc3 17.♕xc3 – White is simply winning.

14.e4



14...♗g7

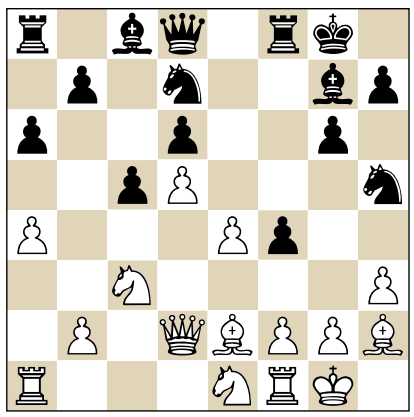
Wesley So, professional: 'Wijk aan Zee has had such a long and prestigious tradition that being in a small and windy town for almost 20 days is totally worth it.'

14...♘d7 is met by the powerful 15.g4 fxg3 16.♕xh6 gxh2 17.♘g5, and I thought White was better here. Later analysis confirmed my assessment:

ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

17...♕e7 18.♗xh5 gxh5 19.♕e6+ ♕xe6 20.dxe6 ♘f6 21.e7 ♖e8 22.0-0-0 ♖xe7 23.♖xd6. White retains the initiative even in the endgame.

15.0-0 ♘d7 16.♘e1

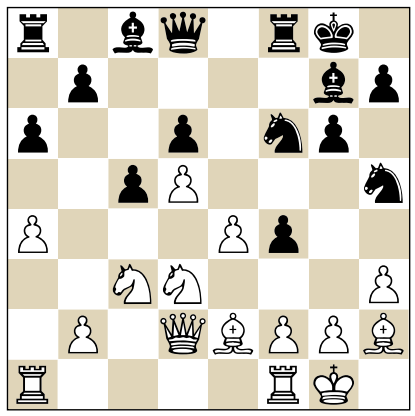


A typical regrouping. My only problem right now is my bishop on h2. Once it gets freed, my position will be as good as winning.

16...♘df6?!

This was dubious. But Loek had been using a lot of time and I was kind of expecting mistakes would come soon. Black should have played 16...♕g5 17.♗xh5 (bad is 17.g4 ♘e5 18.♔h1? when 18...♕h4 wins for Black) 17...gxh5 18.♘e2 ♗h6 19.f3 ♘e5 20.♔h1, when Black has great counterplay.

17.♘d3



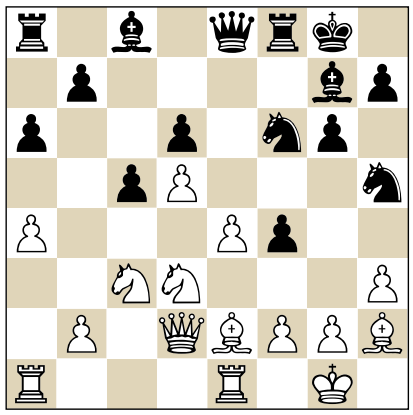
17...♕e8

After 17...c4 18.♘xf4 ♗h6 19.♕e3 ♕e8 20.♗f3 ♕f7 21.♖ad1 White will slowly untangle his position, retaining his extra pawn and threatening, for example, e4-e5.

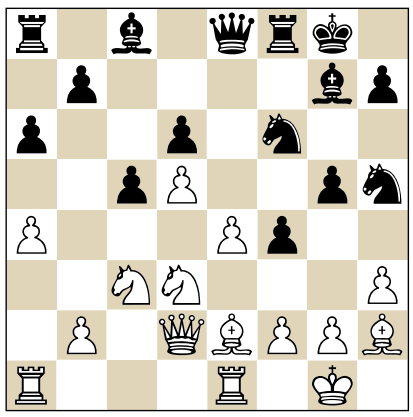
And 17...g5 18.e5 dxe5 19.♘xe5 won't help Black either. His knight on h5

is sidelined and the passed d-pawn could become very annoying.

18.♖fe1



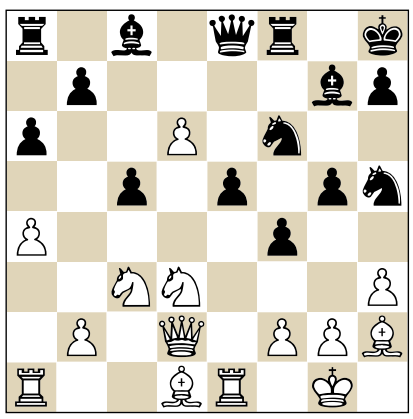
18...g5 Here is one example in which White's centralized pieces more than compensate for the h2-bishop that he gives up: 18...c4 19.♘b4 g5 20.♗xc4 g4 21.e5 dxe5 22.♘d3 g3 23.♘xe5! gxh2+ 24.♔h1, and Black is in big trouble.



19.e5! I had been preparing this pawn break for a long time, as it is clear that it's the fastest way for White to make progress.

19...dxe5 20.d6 ♔h8 21.♗d1?!

As usual, mistakes come in time-trouble! 21.♘xc5 g4 22.hxg4 ♗xg4 23.♖ad1 is probably better. The d-pawn is quite annoying for Black.

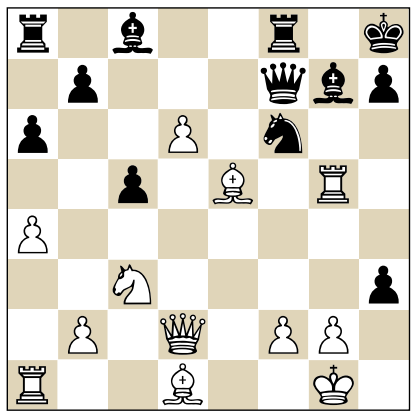


21...g4? Loek decides to go forward! His only chance was to defend with 21...♘d7, when there is nothing concrete: 22.♘d5 ♕g6 23.♘c7 ♖b8 24.♗xh5 ♕xh5 25.♘e6 ♕f7 26.♘xf8 ♕xf8 27.f3 and this is very unclear.

After 21...e4 I saw 22.♘xc5 ♗f5 23.♘3xe4 ♘xe4 24.♘xe4 ♗xe4 25.d7, when White is almost winning.

22.♖xe5 ♕g6 23.♘xf4 ♘xf4 24.♗xf4 gxh3 25.♖g5 ♕f7 26.♗e5

The bishop on h2 has awakened and is now very well placed.

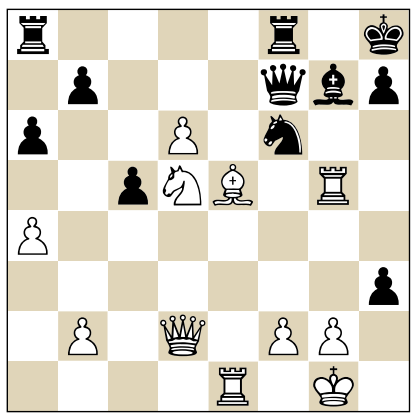


26...♗d7? The final mistake. But White was winning anyway. After 26...♗e6 27.♗f3 ♖g8 28.♖xg7 ♖xg7 29.♘e4 ♘xe4 30.♗xe4 ♖g8 31.♕h6 White's bishops dominate the board.

27.♗b3! ♗e6

On 27...♕xb3 28.♖xg7 removes the last of Black's defenders: 28...♔xg7 29.♕g5+ ♔h8 30.♗xf6+ ♖xf6 31.♕xf6+ ♔g8 32.♖e1 ♖f8 33.♕g5+ ♔h8 34.♖e7, and wins.

28.♗xe6 ♕xe6 29.♖e1 ♕f7 30.♘d5



30...♘h5 Losing very quickly, but there was no defence anyway. E.g. 30...♖ae8 31.♘xf6 ♗xf6 32.d7 ♖d8 33.♕c3, and White wins. **31.♗xg7+ ♘xg7 32.♖e7** Black resigned.

Talking about the weather

Wesley So: My friend the wind

No matter how many calm, fresh and sunny days Wijk aan Zee enjoys in the first month of the year, most chess players associate the Dutch coastal village with wind, rain and storm, or even snow and icy temperatures – and the dangers that come with these meteorological conditions. As Fabiano Caruana said on his arrival – speaking from experience: 'One of your first concerns during the Tata Steel tournament is to stay healthy.' Garry Kasparov famously explained the fact that he only made his first appearance in 1999 by pointing at the unappealing weather, an unexpected reservation from a man who was used to the grim winter in Moscow.

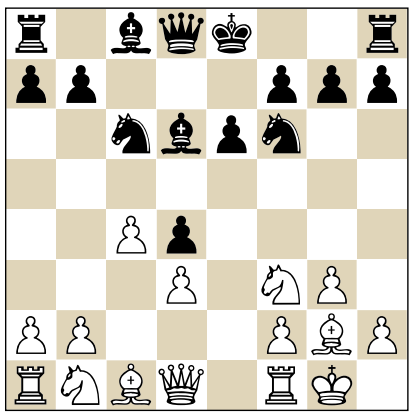
But apparently there is also a bright side. Looking back on a successful tournament, Wesley So gave a most remarkable possible explanation for his fine result: 'The week we arrived, a huge storm came in off the North Sea. The wild wind didn't stop its crazy howling for almost a week. To tell you it was screeching, moaning, slamming and banging night and day doesn't really describe it. To try and explain the high-pitched wailing sound that pushed its way through walls and around tightly closed windows... is impossible if you haven't actually heard it yourself. It was fantastic. Unable to sleep through those nights, I got more study and prep work done than I ever have before. This might be the reason I made some good moves during the day.'

Wesley had remained undefeated for many rounds... until he met your reporter. The modest Dutch guy.

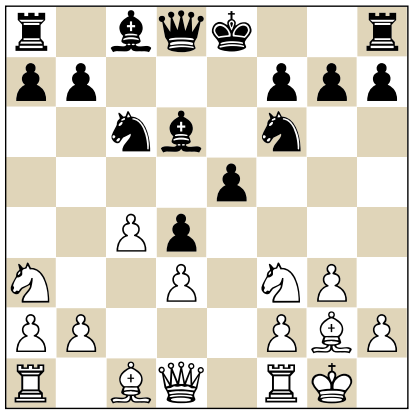
RE 11.2 – A13
Anish Giri
Wesley So
Wijk aan Zee 2015 (12)

1.c4 e6 2.g3 d5 3.♗g2 ♘f6 4.♘f3 d4 5.0-0 c5 6.e3 ♘c6 7.exd4 cxd4 8.d3 ♗d6

We've got the so-called reversed Benoni on the board. Not only is White a tempo up, but Black has also just played the modest ...e7-e6 instead of the usual ... e7-e5. Still it's not easy to use these two tempi, as unlike in the Benoni, White's goal is to fight for the advantage, not for just getting a position with counterplay.



9.♘a3 e5!? A brave decision, but here I would raise an eyebrow. 9...0-0 is more natural, but then Wesley might have been worried about 10.♘c2 e5 11.b4, when White gains some space thanks to the fact that the b4-pawn is taboo, since its central colleague on e5 is of a lot more value.



10.c5!

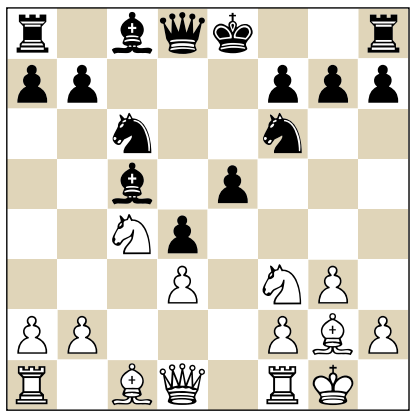
I felt this was the most efficient way to use my two extra tempi. Now White gets the initiative.

10.b4 was also very tempting, but finally, after looking at 10...♘xb4 11.♖e1 0-0 12.♘xe5, I decided that Black would have enough activity to compensate for my killer bishop on g2: 12...♖e8 13.♘f3 ♖xe1+ 14.♘xe1 ♗g4! etc.

10...♗xc5

10...♗c7 11.b4! is quite intimidating, too.

11.♘c4



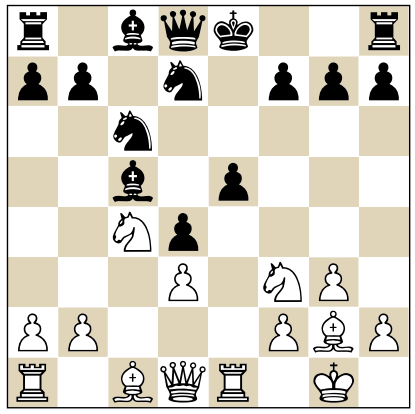
11...♘d7

This is not a very challenging move. 11...e4 12.dxe4 0-0 13.e5 ♘d5 14.a3 looks pleasant for White.

11...0-0 12.♘fxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 is slightly better as well, thanks to the powerful bishop on g2.

And finally there was 11...♗g4!?.

12.♖e1 I could also have taken on e5 first, but I saw no reason to do so.



12...0-0 After a long think Wesley agreed to suffer in a very unpleasant position. The difference in the bishops is too obvious. 12...f6 keeps the pawn, but it's way too dangerous. For

NEW IN CHESS

Anish Giri in a light-hearted pre-game chat with Robin van Kampen. The Dutch number one won four games in a row, 'the second-longest winning streak of the tournament. Haha.'

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GM Josh Friedel

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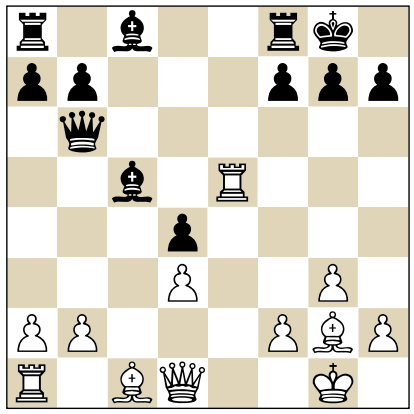
example 13.♘h4 g6 14.a3! when Black is facing all kinds of problems: 14...a5 15.♗h6 ♗f8 16.♗d2 ♗e7 17.♘f5! etc.

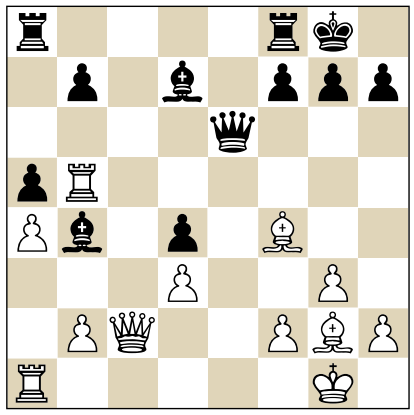
13.♘fxe5 ♘cxe5 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.♖xe5 ♕b6



16.a4!

An important move, threatening a5 and thus gaining the b5-square.

16...a5 17.♕c2 ♗b4 18.♖b5 ♕e6 19.♗f4 ♗d7

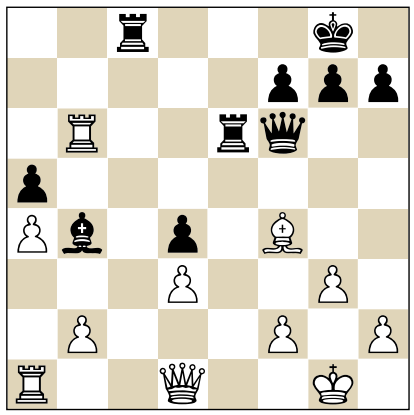


20.♗d5!

Another important move. Now the b7-pawn falls, without enough compensation.

20.♖xb7 ♖ac8 21.♕d1 ♗c6 22.♗xc6 ♕xc6 23.♖b5 ♕c2 would give Black good chances to escape.

20...♕f6 21.♖xb7 ♖ac8 22.♕d1 ♗e6 23.♖b6 ♖fe8 24.♗xe6 ♖xe6



WIJK AAN ZEE

25.♖c1! A cute tactical idea.

25...♖ce8

After 25...♖xc1 26.♖b8+! is the point.

26.♖xe6 ♕xe6 27.♗d2

The simplest way; now I am simply a pawn up.

27...♗xd2 28.♕xd2 ♕f5 29.♖c4

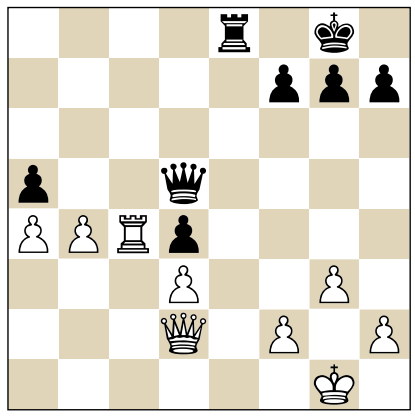
29.♖e1!? is a bit tighter.

29...♕d5

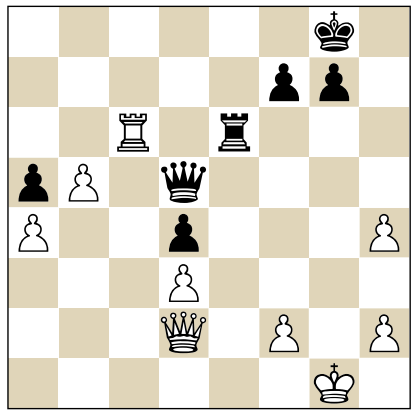
The conversion of the extra pawn doesn't seem too easy, but here I confidently played:

30.b4?

Missing a very strong resource.



30...axb4? Now I get what I wanted. He should have played 30...h5!. I saw the idea of counterplay, combined with *luft* for the king, followed by ...♕f3 and ...♖e2, but not the ...h5-h4 push. Black's initiative is so strong that White has basically no more than a draw: 31.b5 (31.h4 ♕f3! 32.♖xd4 ♖e2 33.♖f4 ♖xd2 34.♖xf3 axb4 35.♖f4 b3 is a draw) 31...h4! 32.gxh4 ♖e6 33.♖c6.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

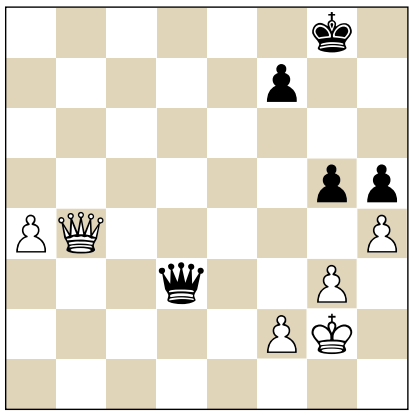
I would probably have played this, but after 33...♖xc6 34.bxc6 ♕xc6 35.♕xa5 ♕g6+ 36.♕g5 ♕xd3 we would basically have to shake hands:

37.a5 ♕d1+ 38.♔g2 d3 39.a6 d2 40.a7 ♕a4 41.♕d8+ ♔h7 42.♕xd2 ♕xa7 etc. Although I almost managed to win 2 vs 1 in my game against Ivanchuk, these 3 vs 2 endings are really hopeless.

31.♕xb4 h5 32.♖xd4

Now it should have been easy, but...

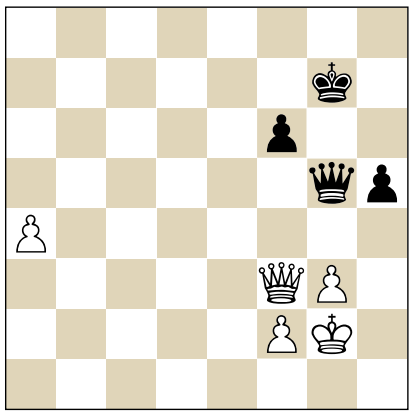
32...♕f3 33.♖e4 ♖d8 34.♖e3 ♕d1+ 35.♔g2 ♖xd3 36.♖xd3 ♕xd3 37.h4 g5



38.♕b8+?

38.hxg5 wins on the spot. After 38...♕d5+ 39.♔h2 ♕xg5 40.a5 I get my pawn to a5, and Black stands no chance: 40...♕f5 41.♕d2 etc.

38...♔g7 39.♕e5+ f6 40.♕e3 ♕c4 41.hxg5 ♕d5+ 42.♕f3 ♕xg5



This position is surprisingly difficult to win, as I will eventually have to allow ...h4, followed by some checks to my king. This is pretty annoying. Although the position is still obviously winning, it is far from simple. I played well enough till move 70, but then made a slip which put the result of the game in doubt. Towards the end, though, I managed to regain control and to finally win this important game after 111 moves.

Another young player (I know, I know, when I say this it sounds silly) is Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. The 24-year-old 'Frenchman with two names' (a nickname that stuck ever since the legendary Viktor Kortchnoi coined it) finished on a respectable +4, tied for second, and caused my only loss. Our game was pretty one-sided, for I had the feeling that I was looking forward to the rest day a little too eagerly. However, the game Maxime was probably happiest about is the one from the last round in which he outplayed Fabiano Caruana.

NOTES BY
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

SI 14.12 – B90
Fabiano Caruana
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave
Wijk aan Zee 2015 (13)

1.e4 c5

No more Caro-Kann against Fabiano! (A reference to the game the Italian won in 30 moves in St. Louis last year, the second win of Caruana's 7-game winning streak – ed.)

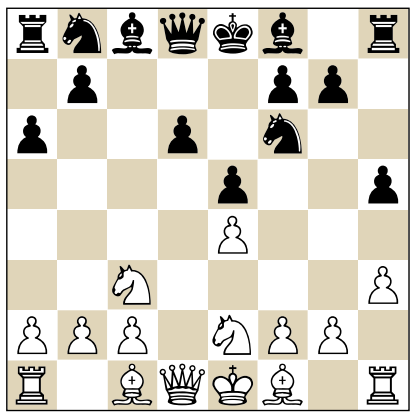
2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.h3

Successfully employed by Bobby Fischer in the early 60s, this ostensibly modest approach against the Najdorf has become quite popular of late.

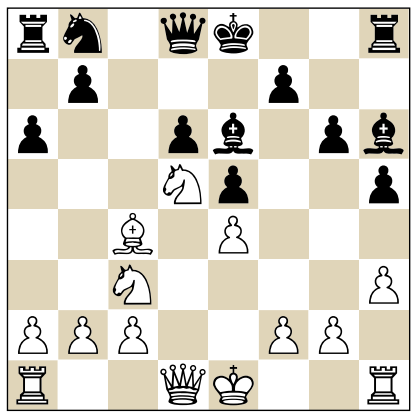
6...e5

Besides 6...e6 the most popular reply. But almost any Black move has been played in this position.

7.♘de2 h5

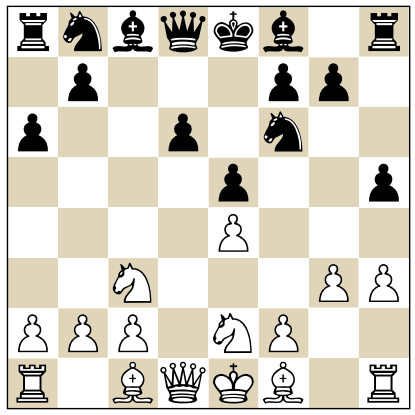


8.g3 I have plenty of experience in this line from both sides, although mostly with Black. At first sight 8.g3 might seem a bit slow, and it is why it was not the most popular option until 2013, when ideas were found for White to create pressure by gradually removing Black's counterplay, generally connected with long-term plans on the kingside. This was urged as well by the fact that immediately playing for the control of the d5-square is not enough for an edge: 8.♗g5 ♗e6 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.♘d5 ♕d8 11.♘ec3 g6 12.♗c4 ♗h6.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Unexpectedly, this bishop controls a few key squares, notably preventing ♘e3. 13.0-0 0-0 14.♗b3 ♘c6 15.♕d3 ♖c8 16.♖ad1 ♘d4 17.♘e2 ♘xb3 18.♕xb3 b5 19.a4. This was the latest example in this line, and here 19...♖b8 would have guaranteed me at least an equal position against Nakamura in the 2014 Sinquefield Cup.



8...♗e6

Both 8...♗e7 9.♗g2 b5 10.♘d5 ♘xd5 11.♕xd5 ♖a7 12.♗e3 ♗e6 13.♕d2 ♖b7 14.♘c3 ♘d7 15.♘d5 and 8...b5 9.♘d5 ♘bd7 10.♗g5 ♗b7 11.♘ec3

ALINA L'AMI

A brilliant win against Fabiano Caruana brought Maxime Vachier-Lagrave shared second place *and* helped him fulfil his New Year's resolution to finally win a last-round game again.

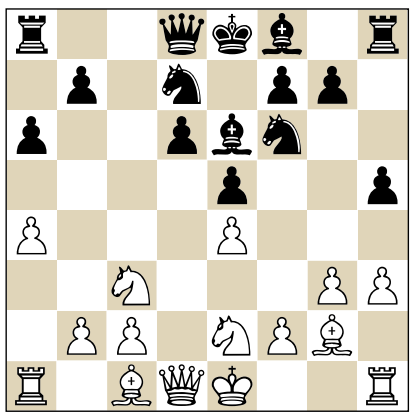
♗e7 12.♘xe7 ♕xe7 13.♗g2 are more pleasant for White.

In general, playing ...b5 too fast gives White good control of the d5-square, without having to part with his dark-squared bishop, which seems to have got itself a great summerhouse on g5.

9.♗g2 ♘bd7

I've always been faithful to this line, allowing White to prevent an expansion on the queenside. My main hope is to get good control in the centre. Still, there is the serious danger of getting neither success on the queenside, nor the d5 break in the centre, while White calmly improves on the kingside.

10.a4

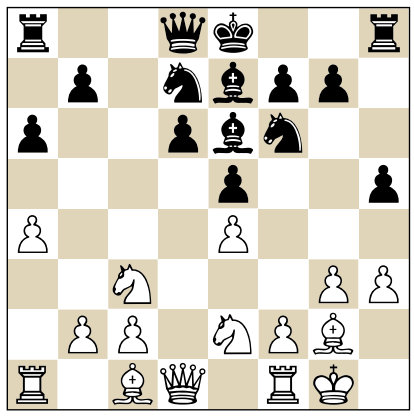


10...♗e7

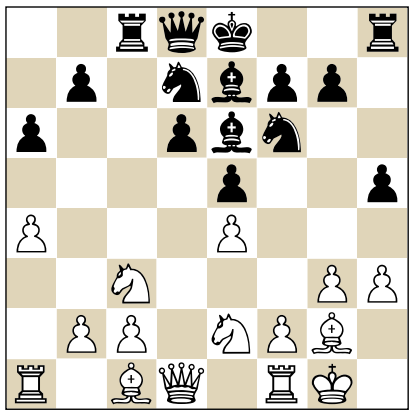
More precise than 10...♖c8 11.♗e3 ♘b6 12.♗g5! (remember this cute double-step bishop move!) 12...♗e7 13.b3, which happened in my game against Judit Polgar in Hoogeveen in 2011. I certainly was not satisfied with the outcome of the opening, as my ♘b6 is out of place and ...d5 is not happening: 13...d5?! 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.exd5 ♗f5 16.♗e4, with a clear White advantage.

11.0-0

I warmly recommend readers interested in this line to investigate all the move order subtleties. For instance, the difference between the text-move and 11.♗e3 or 11.a5 at once.

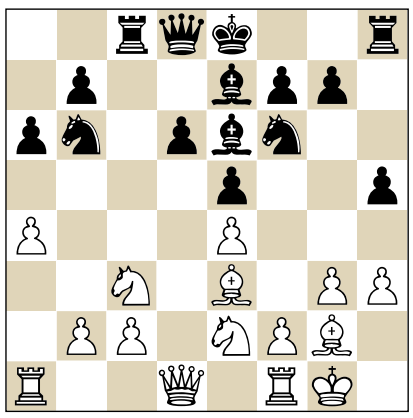


11...♖c8 Instead, 11...♕c7?! 12.♗e3 ♖c8 13.a5 0-0 14.b3 ♖fe8 happened in another of my games, with White against Makarov in the 2013 Russian team championship. Here, after the obvious 15.f4 d5 16.exd5 ♗c5 17.♗xc5 ♕xc5+ 18.♔h2 ♗f5 19.♖a4, Black doesn't have enough compensation.



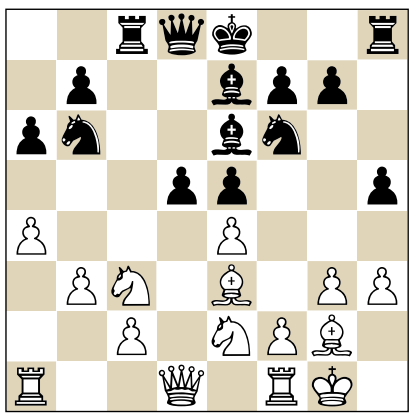
12.♗e3 Now 12.a5 allows 12...♖c5. This pawn grab appears a bit reckless, as after 13.♗e3 ♖xa5 14.♖b1, the ♖a5 has no way back, but being a pawn up Black certainly has resources.

12...♘b6 A very ambitious option. Although I couldn't remember all the details of my preparation, I felt quite confident going for it.



13.b3 Another idea was 13.♗g5, the same two-step bishop move as in Judit's game against me! But White has now castled, and this might give Black some counterplay: 13...♘h7 14.♗xe7 ♕xe7 15.a5 ♘d7, and White is not too confident on the kingside with ...h4 coming, as 16.f4 h4 17.b3 ♘df6 18.f5 ♗d7 is a bit awkward.

13...d5! Otherwise, there is simply no point in 12...♘b6.



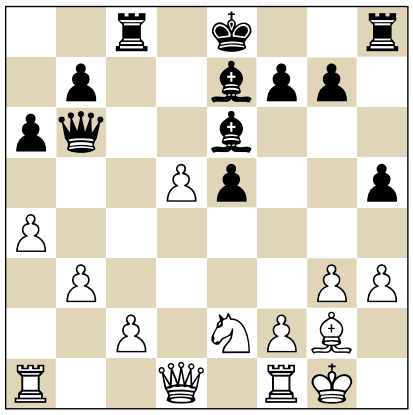
14.♗xb6

14.a5 d4 15.♘xd4 exd4 16.♗xd4 ♗c5! is OK for Black.

14...♕xb6 15.♘xd5

15.exd5 is not the most logical approach: 15...♗f5 16.a5 ♕c7 17.♕d2 0-0, and White can't make any pawn advance on the queenside, where he's supposed to make a difference. The lack of good available squares for his knights also makes it perfectly logical to understand why he should exchange one pair of those.

15...♘xd5 16.exd5



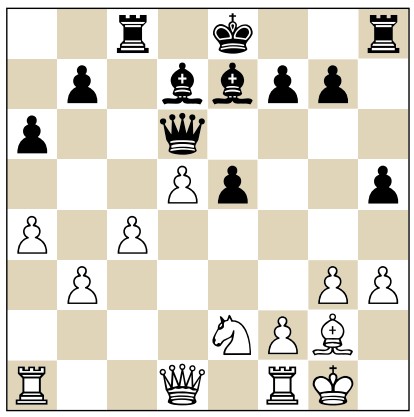
16...♗d7!

Generally, when you sacrifice pawns, you want to push your pieces forward. But the bishop has to make way for the f7-pawn. As for an assessment of the position, I have no idea whether White is better, but he is struggling to move his queenside pawns because of the fantastic job the ♗e7 is doing. Meanwhile, on the kingside my pawn majority can start rolling. Still, I need to be careful not to allow White the opportunity to create a blockade. The battle for the e4-square will be crucial, as White's knight can get there quite quickly.

17.c4 ♕d6!?

After a long think trying to remember my analysis starting with 17...♗c5, I decided to keep on being very ambitious, as Fabiano was clearly not very comfortable with his position and already getting quite low on time. Also, I couldn't find a concrete way for him to exploit my apparent waste of time, while preventing d6 is very useful in any case.

After 17...♗c5 I didn't like 18.d6! allowing White to bail out, since his knight will get to d5 soon; 17...♗b4?! would be a logical move as well, preventing both a5, ♘c3 and ♖e1. But here White has another powerful recycling move in 18.♘c1!.

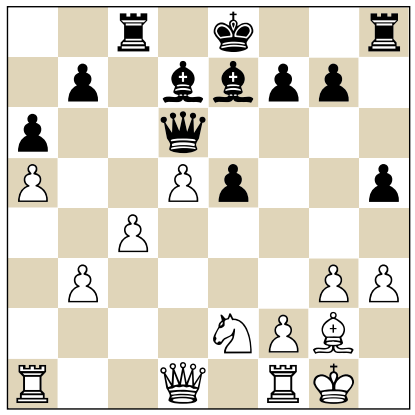


18.a5?!

This is too slow. Although it is understandable that White wants to prevent Black from going ...a5 and ...b6, shutting down White's queenside majority, it takes too much time to get these pawns rolling, Therefore, he should for now have focused on the kingside. After 18.h4 g5! 19.hxg5 ♗xg5, ...h4 may be coming soon, and as White is not preventing ...f5 for now, he still has no blockade on e4. Still, this was quite playable.

After 18.f4, 18...e4! was not to Fabiano's taste. I was mainly focused on 18...exf4 but I like this option more: 18...e4! 19.♘d4 (19.f5 ♕e5) 19...f5, and Black's dark-squared bishop is on its way to becoming an unrivalled monster all over the board, whereas the ♗g2 is lacking any perspective at all.

The best option might have been 18.♘c3 f5 19.♖e1 h4 20.g4 g6!? 21.♕e2 ♗f6, but White's king is not safe after the unavoidable ...e4.

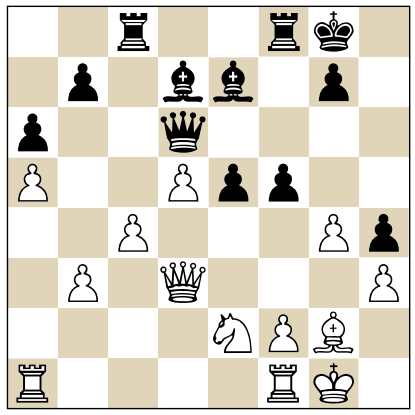


18...f5

18...h4?! 19.g4 only helps White when Black hasn't played ...f5 yet.

19.♕d3 h4 20.g4 0-0!

20...fxg4 21.♘c3 0-0 22.♔h1 is quite playable, but offering my opponent a nice central square and thereby giving up most of my initiative for one lame pawn is not my habit.



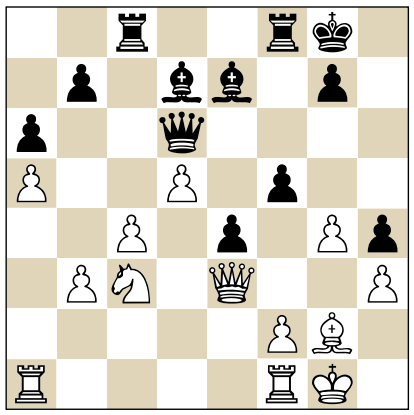
21.♘c3?!

This move feels logical, but White had to prevent 21...e4, although it took me a lot of time to find out the logical follow-up.

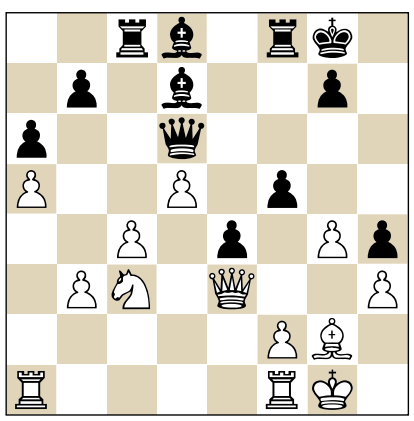
21.gxf5 ♗xf5 22.♕e3 ♕g6 looked very threatening to me, but White might be alright after the cool-headed 23.♔h1 (23.♕xe5? ♗xh3) 23...♗c5 24.♕d2! when to my great surprise Black has no forced win. And probably no advantage at all, as White is threatening b4: 24...♗d3 25.♖ad1 ♗c2 26.♖c1 ♗d3, with a draw.

21...e4 22.♕e3

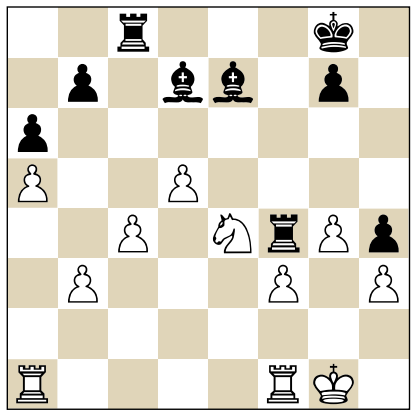
'Offering my opponent a nice central square and thereby giving up most of my initiative for one lame pawn is not my habit.'



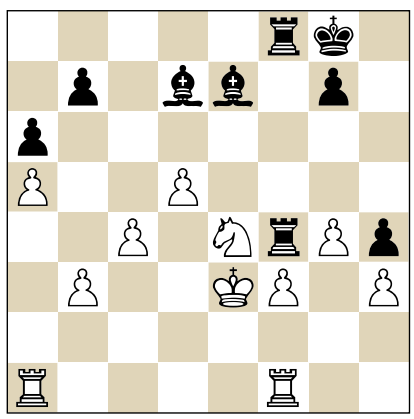
22...♗d8!
After hitting a wall in the very logical line 22...♕e5 23.f4, I invested a considerable amount of time in slow play like 22...g6, when I suddenly realized there was another way to create the typically lethal ♕+♗ battery. A few seconds later, my hand was lashing out the moves and I knew my position was already close to winning.



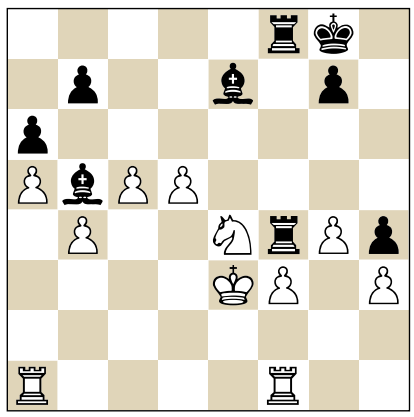
23.♗xe4
White's best hope. He gives up a piece, making the black bishop pair a bit less scary for the moment. Especially the bishop on d7 might be restricted by White's pawns.
Instead, after 23.f4 exf3 24.♖xf3 ♗c7 25.g5 ♖fe8! 26.♕f2 ♕h2+ 27.♔f1 ♗d6! followed by 28...♗c5 is curtains.
23...fxe4
Here 23...♗c7! 24.f4 fxe4 was more precise, with the idea of 25.♘xe4 ♖ce8!.
24.♘xe4 ♕f4 25.♕xf4 ♖xf4 26.f3 ♗e7
I am aiming for the ideal set-up ...♗b4, ...♖cf8 followed by ...♗e8-g6, and White will have too many weaknesses. White's taking his king to the centre was therefore no surprise, although it accelerates his fate.



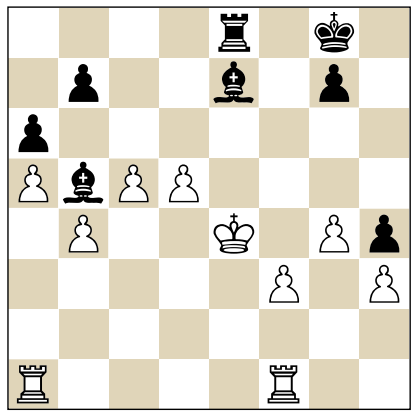
27.♔f2
Or 27.♔g2 ♗b4 28.♖a2 ♖cf8 29.♖ff2 ♔h7 30.♖fe2 ♔h6 31.♖e3 ♗e8! and the extra piece will prevail.
27...♖cf8 28.♔e3



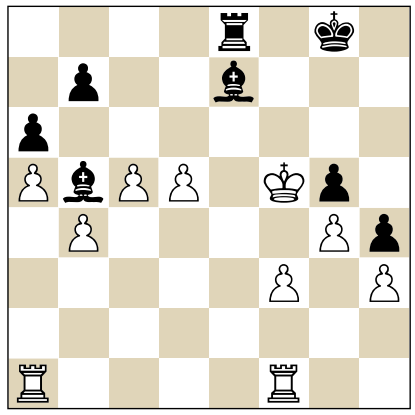
28...♗e8!
Now ...♗g6 is a very serious threat and the ♘e4 can't move, since this would expose ♔e3. Fabiano cleverly tries to create a new chain of pawns.
29.c5 ♗b5 30.b4!



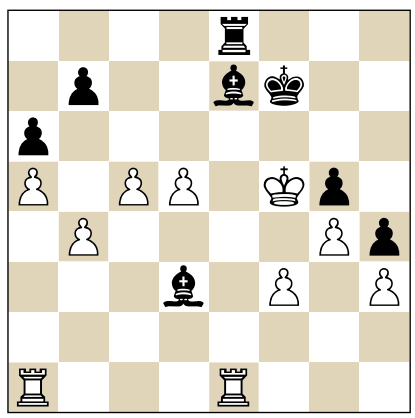
30...♖xe4+! An obvious shot. Black's remaining pieces will work together in perfect harmony.
30...♗xf1? would probably not even be my option without the tactical shot at my disposal. Now, after 31.♖xf1 Black will not pass. At least, that is what it feels like when none of Black's remaining pieces or pawns is able to make a breakthrough.
31.♔xe4 ♖e8 White's king is suddenly under fire and he can't run away, hindered by his own pawns.



32.♔f4 32.♔d4 runs into 32...♗f6 mate. I don't use the word 'cute' lightly, but this is one hell of a cute checkmate!
Also losing is 32.f4 ♗xc5+ 33.♔f3 ♗e2+ 34.♔g2 ♗xf1+.
After 32.♔f5, ♗f6 is not the only way to Rome, but it suffices: 33.g5 ♗d7+ 34.♔g6 ♖e5 35.gxf6 ♗e8+, and mate.
32...g5+ 33.♔f5



33...♔f7! Closing the door. **34.♖fe1**
Or 34.♖ad1 ♗f6 35.♖fe1 ♗d3+ 36.♖xd3 ♖xe1 37.f4 ♖f1, winning.
34...♗d3+



35.♖e4
Or 35.♔e5 ♗xc5 mate. I also have a thing for that one.
35...♗f6
And as mate follows, White resigned. Obviously, I'm delighted with the course of the game, starting from my preparation to the move sequence leading to my strong attack, which did not stop after the queen swap.
It also helped me finish my successful tournament on a high note. Nor did it take me long to fulfil my New Year's resolution to finally win a last-round game again after one-and-a-half years!

■ ■ ■

One more young star who left windy Wijk aan Zee in a good mood was the 22-year-old Chinese (another one!) Ding Liren... And no, he is not the one who won the Qatar Open and about whom you read in the previous issue; that was Yu Yangyi. And no, he is not the 15-year-old kid who is now breaking Magnus's records; that is Wei Yi. Ding Liren is currently the highest rated Chinese player in the world rankings (2755 on the January list). In Wijk aan Zee he won an amazing seven(!) fighting games.

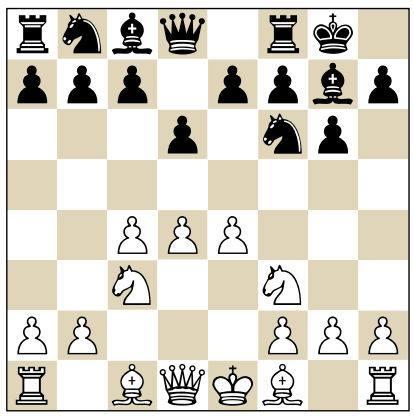
When asked about the secret of his success, the calm and emotionless Chinese declared: 'First I stayed in a single room and Wei Yi and our coach were staying together. I lost the first game. Then I moved in with Wei Yi and our coach stayed alone.' Turns out it was all about the food. Chinese players tend to miss their food when they are in Europe and prefer to cook their own meals instead of trying European cuisines. Fortunately, their coach Xu Jun and Hou Yifan's mother turned out to be excellent cooks, and they provided the Chinese players with the food they are accustomed to every night! Oh well, I can understand poor Ding; I had the same problems when I was on their side of the world.

Here is one of Ding Liren's best efforts, a King's Indian clash between two noted experts.

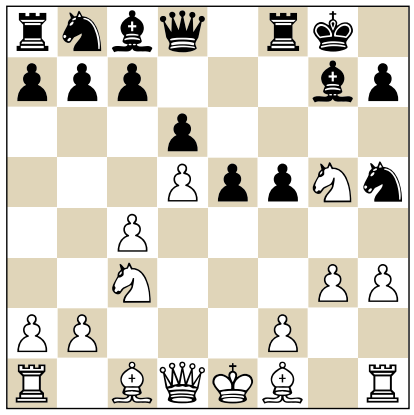
NOTES BY
Ding Liren

KI 20.5 – E90
Teimour Radjabov
Ding Liren
Wijk aan Zee 2015 (4)

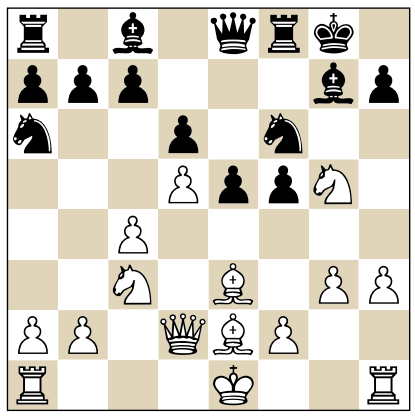
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♘f3 0-0
The King's Indian Defence, which I have been playing with the black pieces since I was a child. My opponent is a prominent expert in this opening, who regularly comes up with important ideas. I had studied his games carefully to improve my understanding of the KID.



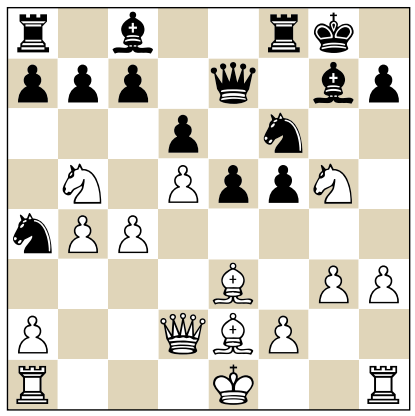
6.h3 e5 7.d5 I have played this position with both sides and have come to the conclusion that the plan of 7...♘h5, followed by ...f5, may suit the spirit of the position best.
7...♘h5 Also popular is 7...a5, with the idea of ...♘a6-c5 or ...♘fd7-c5.
8.g3 f5 Many players prefer 8...♕e8 first in order to control the e6-square, e.g. 8...♕e8 9.♗e2 f5 10.exf5 gxf5 11.♘h4 ♘f6, with an unclear position.
9.exf5 gxf5 10.♘g5



10...♕e8 An important move in my opinion, introduced by Maxim Rodshtein.
11.♗e2 After 11.c5 Black goes 11...♘f6. After 11.g4, 11...♘f4 is the point behind 10...♕e8.
11...♘f6 12.♗e3
Here 12.g4 is not as annoying as in the previous line: 12...h6 13.♘e6 ♗xe6 14.dxe6 ♕xe6 15.gxf5 ♕xf5 16.♖g1 ♔h8, and after ...♘c6-d4 Black is out of danger. Therefore White can play 13.♘f3 in case of 12...h6, when the position looks pretty quiet.
12...♘a6 13.♕d2



13...♗d7 An inaccuracy. I calculated the variations after 13...h6 or 13...♘c5, but I couldn't make either of them work. So in the end I just played what I believed was a useful waiting move.
I should have played 13...♘c5 14.b4 (in case of 14.0-0-0 h6 15.♘f3 ♘ce4 16.♘xe4 ♘xe4 17.♕c2, compared to the game, I can immediately act on the queenside: 17...c6! with an extremely complicated position, e.g. 18.dxc6 bxc6 19.g4 d5 20.gxf5 ♗xf5 21.♘h4 ♗h7 22.♖hg1 ♘g5 23.♕d2 ♘e4, and this might be repetition) 14...♘a4 15.♘b5



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

15...♕e7!. I had missed this simple but strong move. Or should I say I didn't want to leave my knight on a4. On the other hand, White cannot find a safe place for his king either.

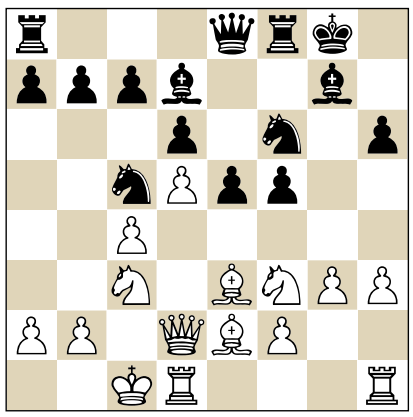
14.0-0-0 h6

I played 14...h6 first, because I wanted to avoid the possibility, after 14...♘c5 15.g4 h6, of 16.♘e6!?.

15.♘f3

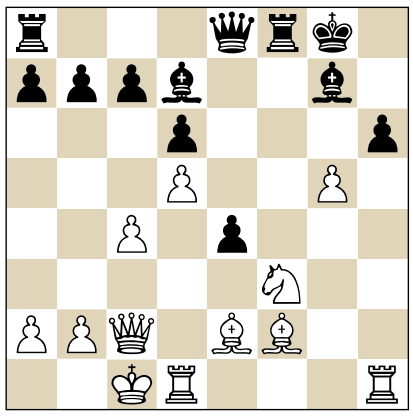
Now 15.♘e6 won't work because of 15...♗xe6 16.dxe6 ♕xe6 17.♗xh6 ♘e4.

15...♘c5



16.♘h4

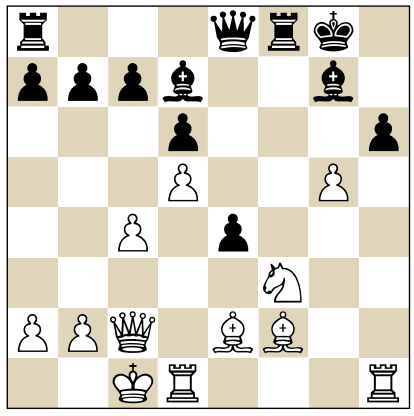
Now White is threatening 17.g4. Here I was afraid of the variation starting with the immediate 16.g4: 16...♘ce4 17.♘xe4 ♘xe4 18.♕c2 ♘xf2 19.♗xf2 fxg4 20.hxg4 e4 21.g5



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

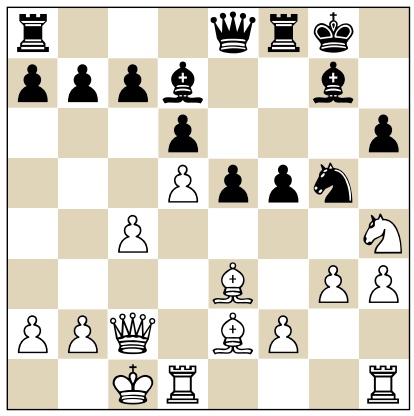
and now 21...h5! is a very important detail (21...exf3 runs into 22.♗d3). It looks as if Black will be able to hold his own: 22.♖de1 ♗g4 (22...♕f7 is also possible, but harder to find over the board: 23.♕xe4 ♖ae8 24.♕d3 ♕f4+ 25.♕d2 ♗xb2+! 26.♔c2 ♕xd2+ 27.♔xd2 ♗g4, with equality) 23.♗d4 ♗xf3 24.♗xf3 ♖xf3 25.♗xg7 ♔xg7 26.♖xe4 ♕f7 27.♕e2 ♖f2 28.♕xh5 ♕xh5 29.♖xh5 ♖af8, with an approximately equal position.

The computer suggestion 16.♗xc5 dxc5 didn't even occur to me.



16...♘ce4 17.♘xe4 ♘xe4 18.♕c2 ♘g5 The only move, but a perfectly acceptable one.

18...♕d8 fails to 19.♗d3, while 18...♘c5 can be met by 19.g4.



19.♗d3 A very interesting idea. He wants to provoke ...e4 and fix my pawn structure.

19.♔b1 is a little slow: 19...♗a4! 20.b3 ♗d7 21.♗d3 ♕f7, and Black can attack along the long diagonal.

19...e4

19...♕f7 was stronger: 20.f4 exf4 21.gxf4 ♖ae8 22.♖de1 ♘e4 23.♖hg1 ♔h7, when Black keeps the balance with energetic play.

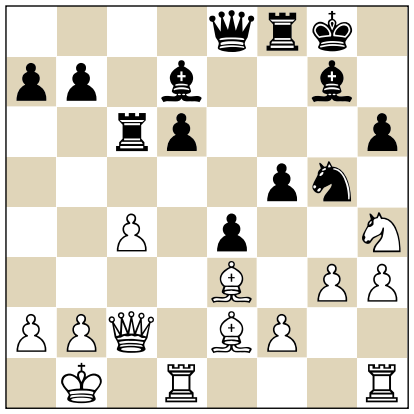
20.♗e2

Now we can conclude that the position is slightly better for White.

20...♖c8

20...♖b8 was another way to support the ...c5 idea: 21.♔b1 c5 22.dxc6 bxc6 23.♗d4 ♗xd4 24.♖xd4 ♖f6 25.♖hd1, with a white edge.

21.♔b1 c5 22.dxc6 ♖xc6

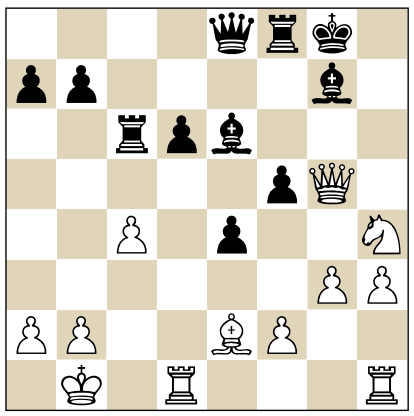


23.♕d2 He had many choices here, such as 23.♕b3 or 23.♗d4. Also 23.c5 deserves attention: 23...dxc5 24.♗b5 ♖c7 (24...♘e6!?) 25.♖xd7 ♖xd7 26.♗xc5 ♖ff7 27.♗xa7 ♕e5 28.♗xd7 ♖xd7 29.♘g6 ♕b5. White is a pawn up, but Black has typical KID-like counterplay.

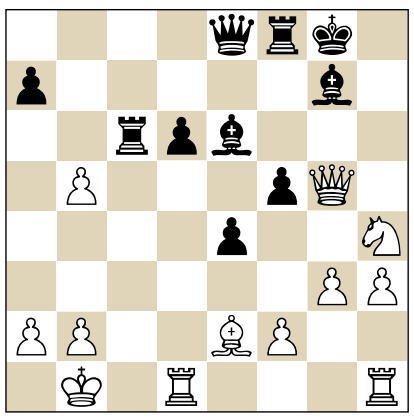
23...♗e6 24.♗xg5

24.♗d4 was a safer way to play: 24...♕f7 25.♗xg7 ♔xg7 26.♕d4+ ♔h7 27.b3, when White has a solid advantage, e.g. 27...f4 28.♗g4!.

24...hxg5 25.♕xg5



25...♖a6 I thought I must have enough compensation for the pawn, but I couldn't find the best move, which was 25...b5! 26.♗h5 (26.cxb5 runs into the amazing

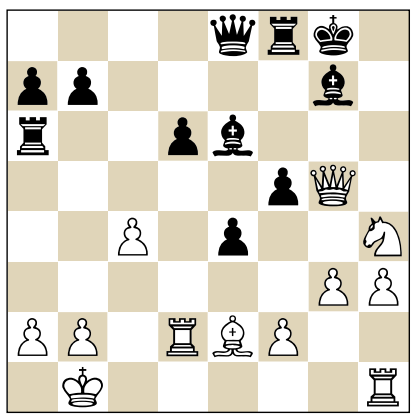


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

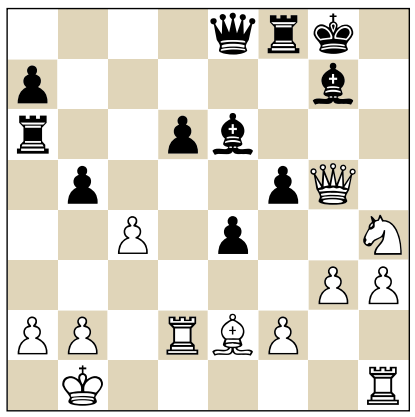
26...♖a6!! 27.a3 (27.bxa6 ♕a4) 27...♖xa3! 28.bxa3 ♗a2+! 29.♔c2 ♕c8+. I think I would have won the brilliancy prize – if there had been one – if I could have gotten this position on the board) 26...♕b8! 27.♘g6 bxc4 28.♘e7+ ♔h8 29.♖d2 ♖b6 30.♘g6+ ♔h7 31.♘xf8+ ♔g8 32.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 33.♘xe6+ ♔h6 34.♖c1 ♔xh5 35.♖xc4, and this is probably equal, but Black has easier play.

26.♖d2

If 26.b3 then 26...b5 will be even more powerful, since 27.cxb5? is met by 27...♗xb3.

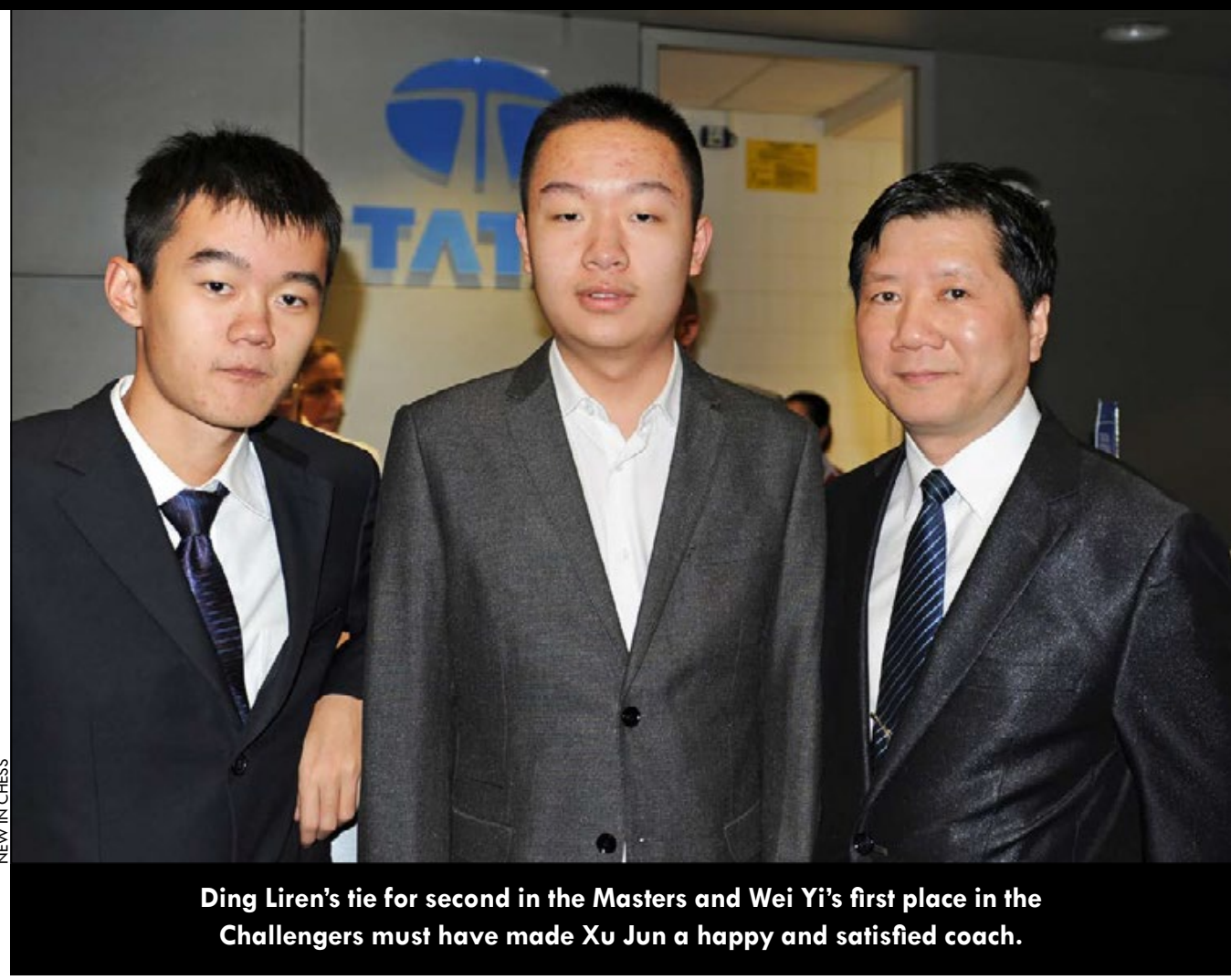


26...b5? A mistake. During the game I hesitated between 26...b5 and 26...♕a4. After 26...♕a4 27.b3 Black can choose between giving a perpetual or playing on with 27...♖b6 (27...♕xb3+ 28.axb3 ♖a1+ 29.♔c2 ♖a2+ is the perpetual) 28.♕e3 ♕a5 29.♖c1.



27.♖c1 The only move I had considered as well, missing the strong continuation 27.g4! when maybe the best I can hope for is an endgame a pawn down after 27...♕d8 28.♕xd8 ♖xd8 29.♘xf5 bxc4 30.♘xg7 ♔xg7 31.♖c1 ♖c8 32.♖c3 d5 33.f3.

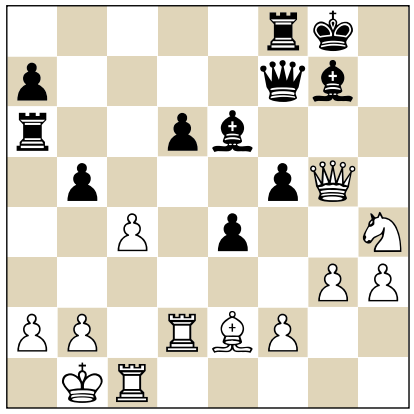
27...♕f7



NEW IN CHESS

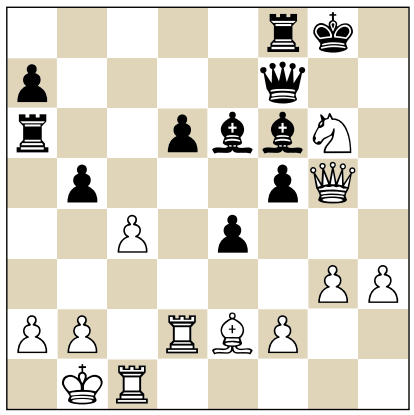
Ding Liren's tie for second in the Masters and Wei Yi's first place in the Challengers must have made Xu Jun a happy and satisfied coach.

I offered a draw here, because I couldn't figure out what was going on and I wanted to enjoy the rest day in a good mood.



28.♘g6 The computer line 28.♕g6 ♖c6 29.♖dc2 f4 30.♕xe4 d5 shows how difficult this position is.

28...♗f6 Driving his queen away from g5 and avoiding ♘e7+.



29.♕h6? Surprisingly, this is the decisive mistake. He should have exchanged queens by means of 29.♕h5 bxc4 30.♘xf8 ♕xh5 31.♗xh5 ♔xf8, although Black has a strong pawn centre and cannot be worse.

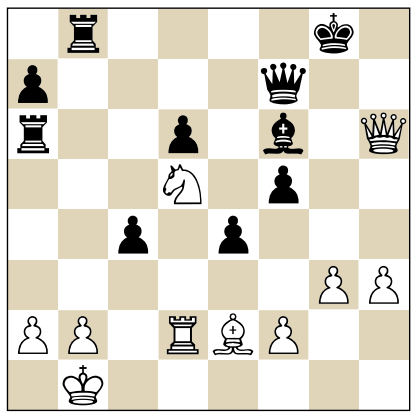
29...♖b8

Now all my pieces are well-placed.

30.♘f4 ♗xc4 31.♖xc4

31.♗xc4 also loses: 31...bxc4 32.♘d5 ♗xb2 33.♖xb2 ♖xb2+ 34.♔xb2 ♕xd5 35.♕g6+ ♔f8 36.♕f6+ ♔e8 etc.

31...bxc4 32.♘d5



32...♗g7

The only move, but good enough. Not 32...♗xb2? 33.♘e7+ ♕xe7 34.♗xc4+, of course.

33.♕g5 c3

The only winning move, but not very hard to find.

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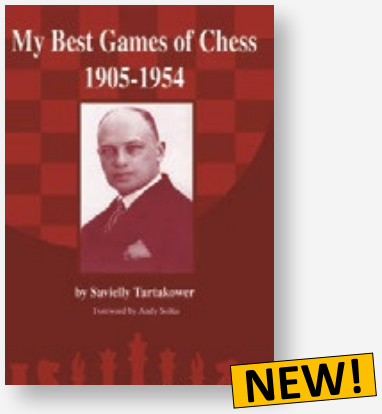

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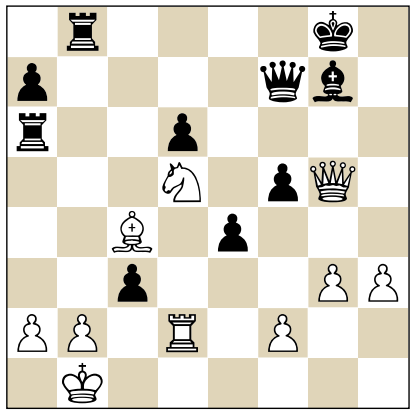
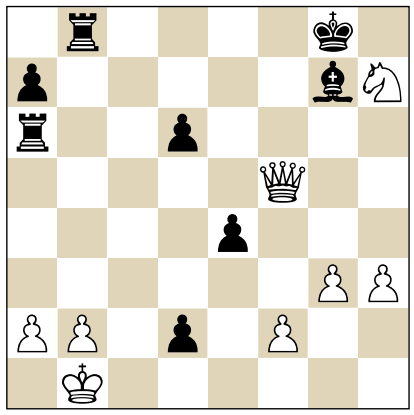
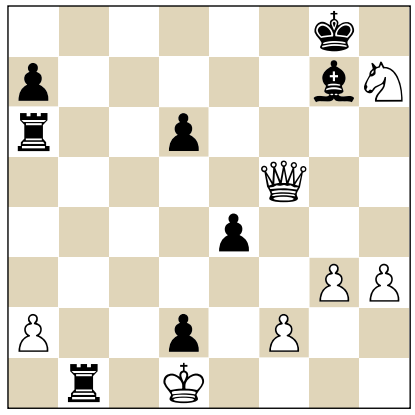
34.♗c4
The best practical choice. After 34.♘xc3 ♖c6 35.♘d5 ♕xd5! 36.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 37.♖xd5 ♖bc8 White's position is hopeless.



34...cxd2
I thought 34...♔f8 might have been simpler, but I didn't play it because of 35.♖c2 ♖c6 36.♗b3, having missed the clever move 35...♖a5!.
35.♘f6+ ♔f8 36.♘h7+ ♔e8 37.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 38.♕xf5+ ♔g8



39.♔c2?
A blunder. Maybe he had overlooked my 40th move.
Critical was 39.♕d5+ ♔xh7 (39...♔h8 40.♔c2) 40.♕xe4+. I calculated this far, thinking that I would definitely be able to hide my king somewhere, but it's not an easy task: 40...♔h8 41.♕h4+ ♔g8 42.♕c4+ ♔f8 43.♕f4+ ♔e7 44.♕e4+ ♗e5 45.♕h7+ ♔e6 46.♕g6+ ♗f6 (it's important to put the bishop on f6) 47.♕e4+ ♔f7 48.♕h7+ ♔f8 49.♕h6+ ♔g8! 50.♕g6+ ♗g7 51.♕e6+ ♔h8, and White has run out of checks: 52.♔c2 ♖xa2, and Black wins.
39...♖xb2+ 40.♔d1 ♖b1+



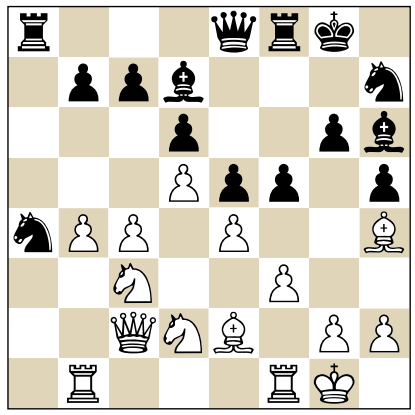
White cannot avoid losing his queen, so he resigned.

■ ■ ■

Winning seven games would usually mean first place, but with his trademark aggressive chess Ding also lost three. One of them against me, and, frankly, I was quite happy with that one. It was also the game that started my four-game winning streak. As Magnus put it, 'the second-longest winning streak of the tournament. Haha.' Very funny ☺.

KI 17.4 – E92
Anish Giri
Ding Liren
Wijk aan Zee 2015 (9)

1.c4 g6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♘f3 0-0 6.♗e2 e5 7.d5 a5 8.♗g5 h6 9.♗h4 ♘a6 10.♘d2 ♗d7 11.0-0 ♕e8 12.b3 ♘h7 13.f3 h5 14.a3 ♗h6 15.♖b1 ♘c5 16.♕c2 f5 17.b4 axb4 18.axb4 ♘a4



The King's Indian was quite expected from Ding Liren and pretty welcome too. Having won only one game so

Anish Giri and World Champions Hou Yifan and Magnus Carlsen pose together with students of the Rotterdam Dance Academy at the opening ceremony.

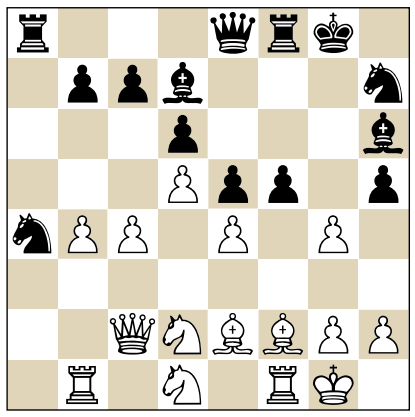
far... in the King's Indian with White, I felt I might have my chances to score 2/2. I went for the old Petrosian Variation, and so far we have been following a game played in 1986 between Artur Jussupow and a player called Scheeren, who is unknown to me.

19.♘d1

This is a new move. More standard is for the knight to go to b5. I had seen similar ideas in my preparation, but since all the lines are quite confusing and frequently transpose to one another, I wasn't quite sure whether I wanted to play it in this position. Anyway, the move is alright, since the knight guards the e3-square. Note that the knight might be better placed on a4 than on a6, but it is still the problem piece here. In fact, this is the only problem for Black in the entire Petrosian Variation. After 19.♘b5!? ♗xb5 20.cxb5 ♗e3+ 21.♔h1 f4 Mr. Scheeren got an interesting position and went on to contain the legendary Jussupow.

19...g5 20.♗f2 g4 21.fxg4

I decided to get rid of the tension, hoping to use the fact that the knight on a4 is quite awkwardly placed. However, a surprise was awaiting me.

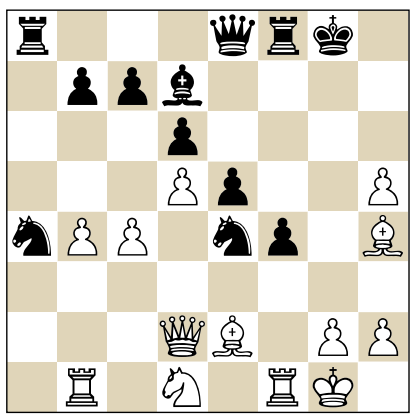


21...♗xd2 Wow! The idea is brilliant from a strategic point of view, but unfortunately for Ding there is a concrete refutation.

22.♕xd2 f4 Imaginative stuff!

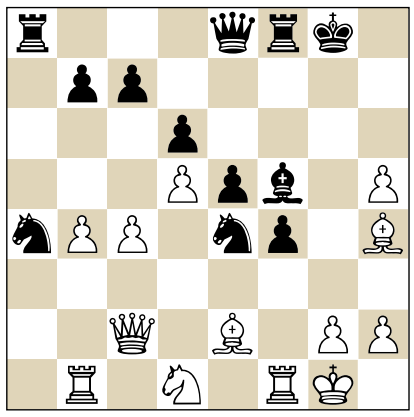
23.gxh5 ♘g5 24.♗h4!

If I had paid attention to my e4-pawn, my opponent's idea would have been fully justified (24.♕c2? f3!). Here, however, White takes over the initiative.



24...♘xe4 25.♕c2 ♗f5

Bluffing. 25...♘f6 is quite sad after the simple 26.♗xf6 ♖xf6 27.♘f2, when White has a beautiful blockade on e4 and the kingside pawns will eventually speak the decisive word.



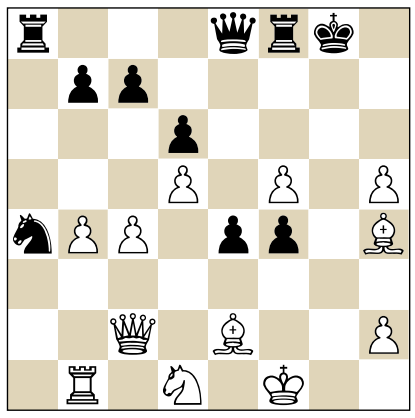
26.g4!! I was very happy to execute this move. As a matter of fact, it is also the only move to worry Black.

26.♗d3 ♕xh5 27.♗xe4 ♗xe4 28.♕xe4 ♕xh4 would have been OK for Black.

26...♘g3

Trying to create some kind of mess, as 26...fxg3 is met by 27.♖xf5 and 26...♗h7 by 27.♗d3 ♘f6 28.♗xf6 ♗xd3 29.♕xd3 ♖xf6 30.♘f2. The lines are simple, yet nice.

27.gxf5 ♘xf1 28.♔xf1! e4



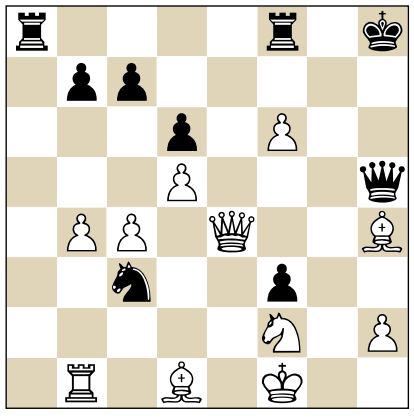
29.f6! ♔h8

29...f3 30.♗xf3! exf3 31.♕g6+ ♕xg6 32.hxg6 is hopeless for Black: 32...♘b6 33.♘e3 ♘d7 34.♘g4.

30.♘f2

The most forcing, although 30.♗g4!? might have been even stronger.

30...f3 31.♗d1 ♕xh5 32.♕xe4 ♘c3



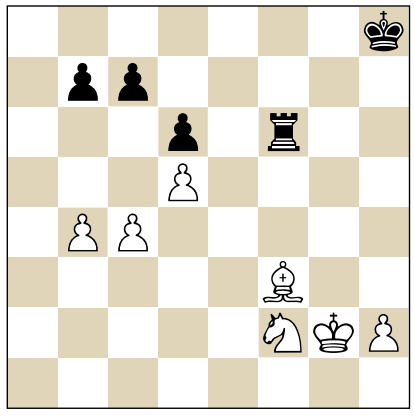
33.♕d4! The rook on b1 turns out not to be doomed. This would normally be the end of the game, but somehow it lasted a lot longer...

33...♖f7

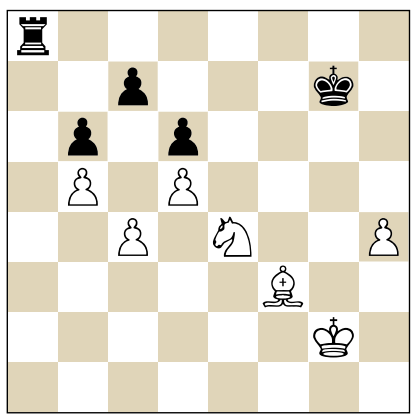
After 33...♘xb1 34.f7+ ♔h7 35.♗c2+ ♔h6 36.♕f6+ mate is in the offing.

34.♕xc3 ♕xh4 35.♗xf3 ♖a2 36.♖b2 ♖xb2 37.♕xb2 ♕xf6 38.♕xf6+ ♖xf6 39.♔g2

This endgame is hopeless for Black, and although I really converted it in neither the best nor the fastest way, the result was never in any doubt.



39...♖f8 40.b5 ♔g7 41.♘e4 b6 42.h4 ♖a8

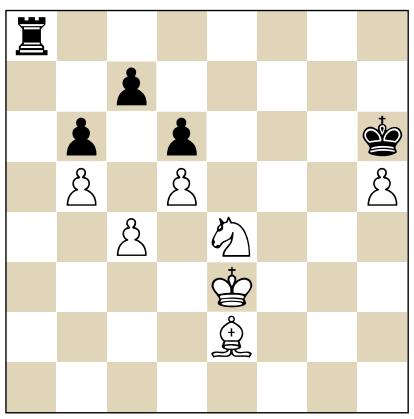


43.h5?! The cage that the black king will find itself in felt so beautiful... But better was 43.♘g5!.

43...♖a2+ 44.♔f1

Here 44.♔g3! ♖c2 45.♔h4! should have been played.

44...♔h6 45.♗e2 ♖a8 46.♔f2 ♖f8+ 47.♔e3 ♖f7 48.♗f3 ♖f8 49.♔f2 ♖a8 50.♗e2 ♖a3 51.♘f6 ♖a8 52.♔e3 ♖f8 53.♘e4 ♖a8 54.♔f4 ♖f8+ 55.♔g3 ♖a8 56.♘f2 ♖a2 57.♗d1 ♖b2 58.♘e4 ♖b1 59.♗e2 ♖b2 60.♔f2 ♖a2 61.♔e3 ♖a8



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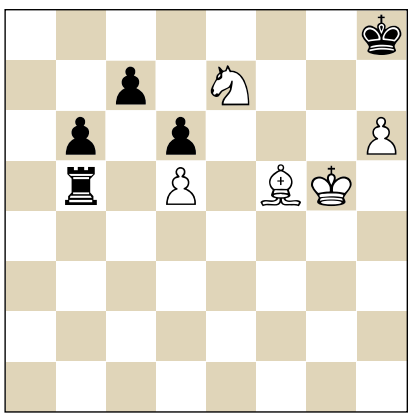
62.♗g4!? Another way of winning this position was something like 62.♔f4 ♖f8+ 63.♔g4 ♖g8+ 64.♔h4 ♖f8 65.♘g3! ♖f4+ 66.♗g4 ♖xc4 67.♘f5+ ♔h7 68.♔g5 ♖c5 69.♘e7 ♖xb5 70.♗f5+ ♔g7 71.h6+ ♔h8.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

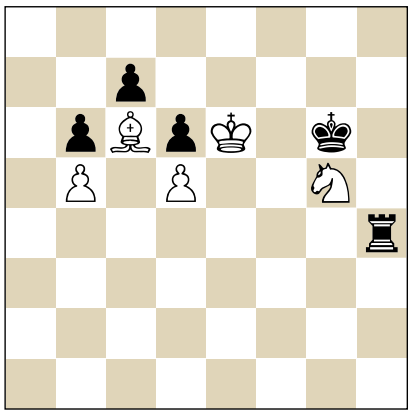
Here I decided I might get confused and not find a mate, but it's not so hard after all: 72.♘g6+ ♔g8 73.♗e6+ ♔h7 74.♘f8+ ♔h8 75.♔g6 ♖b2 76.♘h7! ♖g2+ 77.♘g5 b5 78.♗f5 b4 79.h7 b3 80.♔f6, and the threat of mate in one ends the game.

62...♖a4 62...♖f8 would probably have forced me to go for the other winning plan: taking the king to h4 and giving up the c4-pawn.

63.♔f4! ♖xc4 64.♗d7

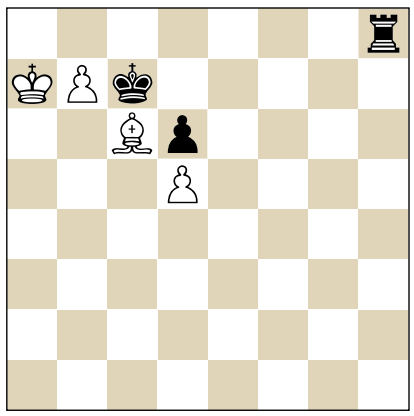
I liked this way of converting, but my taste is quite perverted when it comes to technique.

64...♔xh5 65.♔f5 ♔h6 66.♗c6 ♔g7 67.♘g5 ♖h4 68.♔e6 ♔g6



69.♘f3

69.♔d7 ♔xg5 70.♔xc7 wins beautifully, too, but I didn't want to depend on one tempo: 70...♔f6 71.♔xb6 ♖h7 72.♔a6 ♔e7 73.b6 ♔d8 74.b7 ♔c7 75.♔a7 ♖h8



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

76.♗d7! I was very proud to see this line; pity I couldn't show it: 76...♖b8 77.♗c8 ♖xc8 78.bxc8♕+ ♔xc8 79.♔b6, and wins.

69...♖f4 70.♘d2 ♔g5 71.♔e7 ♖f5 72.♘e4+ ♔f4 73.♘f6 ♔e5 74.♘d7+ ♔d4 75.♔d8

Black resigned. His queenside structure will collapse.

As you can imagine, this was not an ordinary tournament for me. It is a rare occurrence for me to win one game in a row in a top event, let alone four. Supported by the Dutch crowd, I managed to get to +4 before the last round and had some theoretical chances of first place. In the final round I tried to complicate matters with black against solid Wojtaszek (obviously *not* with the Dutch Defence), but it didn't work out and a draw was reached quite quickly. Although Magnus didn't play convincingly against Saric, his nemesis from the Tromsø Olympiad (where he lost to Ivan with Black), he nevertheless made a draw as White. As a result, Magnus took first prize finishing on +5, half a point ahead of a hungry quartet: Vachier-Lagrave, So and Ding and myself.

Let's finish with a brief summary of the tournament by the World Champion himself:

1. First tournament I've won since April.
2. First time since Zurich I have gained rating points.
3. My longest winning streak ever.

I feel a spicy fourth point is missing. Suggestions, anyone?

Postscript

If he plays in Wijk aan Zee next year, Magnus Carlsen will face the young boy whose current results are reminiscent of the Norwegian's at the same age. At 15, Wei Yi became the youngest winner of the Tata Steel Challengers ever and earned the right to play in the 2016 Tata Masters.

The Chinese prodigy scored 10½ from 13 (a 2804 performance) and finished half a point ahead of top seed David Navara and one and a half points ahead of third-prize winner Sam Shankland.

From his eight wins, Wei Yi chose to annotate his victory over former European Champion Vladimir Potkin.

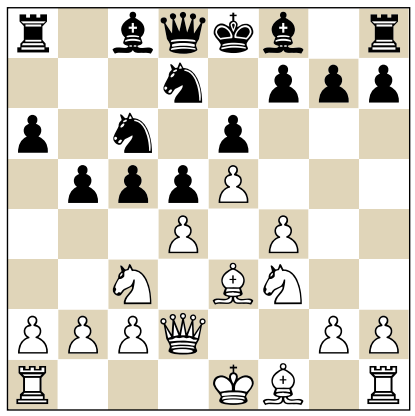
NOTES BY
Wei Yi

FR 4.4 – C11
Wei Yi
Vladimir Potkin
Wijk aan Zee 2015 (2)

1.e4 e6

The French Defence, in which Potkin is a great specialist.

2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♗e3 a6 8.♕d2 b5



9.♗d3!?

This is a rare line. The two main choices are 9.a3 and 9.dxc5.

9...b4

I think 9...♕b6 is the best choice for

Black. After 10.♕f2 cxd4 11.♘xd4 ♗c5 12.♘ce2 f6! 13.exf6 ♘xf6 Black has a good position.

10.♘a4

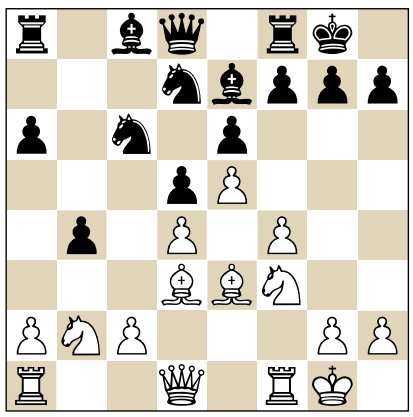
Another rare choice, which Russian grandmaster Motylev played twice, against two Chinese players...

10...c4 11.♗e2 c3 12.♕d1 cxb2 13.♘xb2 ♗e7

The alternative is 13...♘b6 14.0-0 ♗e7 15.♗d3 ♗d7, as was seen in Nakamura-Wang Hao, Moscow 2010.

14.0-0 0-0 15.♗d3

We are still following a game played by two top players: Motylev-Wang Hao, Guangzhou 2010.

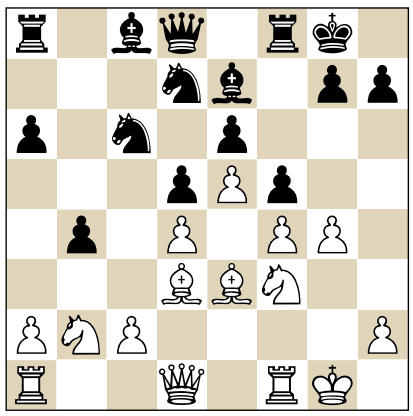


15...f5!?

A natural move. Here Wang Hao chose 15...a5, but after 16.♘g5! I feel that Black is under pressure.

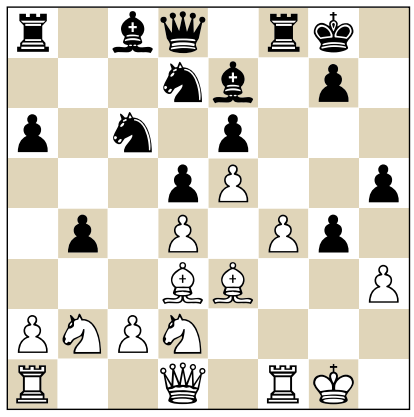
16.g4!

An exciting move! I first considered going 16.♔h1 first, and only then 17.♖g1 and 18.g4, but that is kind of slow. Therefore I chose the more dynamic move in the game.



16...a5

Maybe Black should have accepted the pawn sacrifice: 16...fxg4!? 17.♘d2 (after 17.♘g5 ♗xg5 18.fxg5 ♖xf1+ 19.♕xf1 ♘e7 Black is OK) 17...h5! 18.h3 (in case of 18.♗g6 Black has 18...♖f5! and as he is ready to play 19...♘f8, he has enough compensation for the exchange)



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

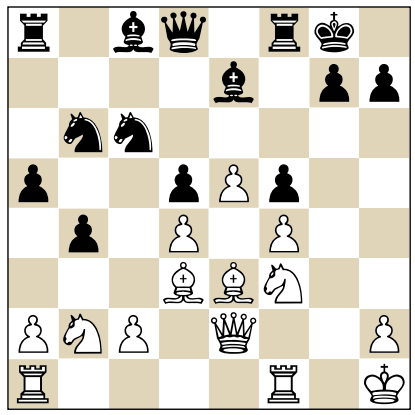
18...♗c5! A brilliant computer move! Now after 19.dxc5 ♕h4 20.♕e1 ♕xh3 21.♗f2 g5! (after 21...♗b7 22.♕e3 ♕xe3 23.♗xe3 d4 24.♗f2 ♖xf4 25.♗g3 ♖xf1+ 26.♖xf1 ♘xc5 27.♗g6 ♘e7 28.♗xh5 ♘f5 29.♗e1 White is better) 22.♕e3! gxf4 23.♕xh3 gxh3 24.♘a4 ♘dxe5 25.♘b6 ♖a7 26.♔h2 ♘g4+ 27.♔xh3 ♖g7 the position is quite complicated.

17.gxf5 exf5 18.♕e2

Stopping Black from playing ...♗a6.

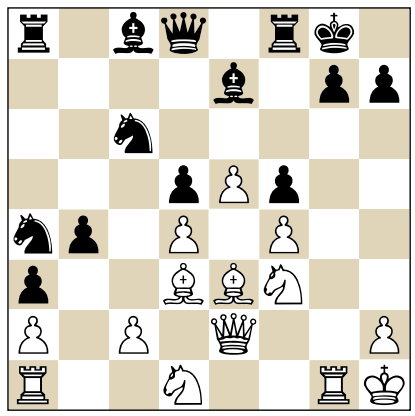
18...♘b6 19.♔h1

Now White is ready for 20.♖g1 and an attack along the g- and h-files. Black needs to defend precisely and try to create some counterplay on the queenside.



19...a4 20.♖g1 a3 21.♘d1 ♘a4

Restricting the knight on d1, because if White moves it, Black will have ...♘c3. But this move gives White an opportunity to attack the black queenside.



22.♖g3

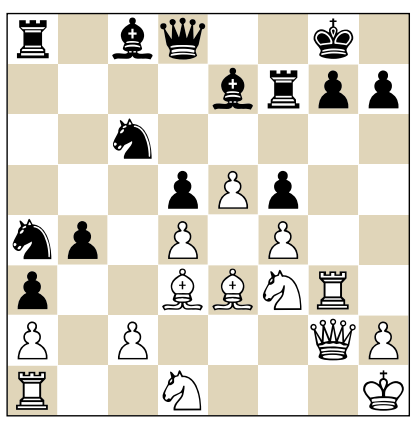
After the immediate 22.♗b5!? ♕b6 23.♖b1 White is slightly better, but I wanted to continue the attack on the kingside.

22...♖f7 23.♕g2

Wijk aan Zee 2015 — cat. XX

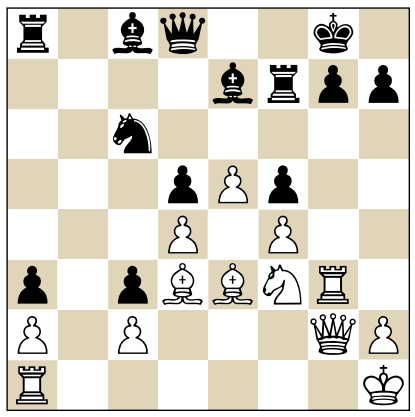
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		TPR
1	Magnus Carlsen	IGM NOR 2862	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	0	1	1	½	1	1	9	2877
2	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	IGM FRA 2757	½	*	1	½	1	0	1	½	½	½	1	1	½	½	8½	2854
3	Anish Giri	IGM NED 2784	½	0	*	1	1	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	8½	2852
4	Wesley So	IGM USA 2762	½	½	0	*	½	1	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	8½	2854
5	Ding Liren	IGM CHN 2732	½	0	0	½	*	½	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8½	2856
6	Vassily Ivanchuk	IGM UKR 2715	½	1	½	0	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	7½	2805
7	Fabiano Caruana	IGM ITA 2820	0	0	½	½	1	½	*	½	0	½	½	1	1	1	7	2769
8	Teimour Radjabov	IGM AZE 2734	0	½	½	½	0	½	½	*	1	½	½	1	½	0	6	2717
9	Radoslaw Wojtaszek	IGM POL 2744	1	½	½	½	0	½	1	0	*	½	½	0	½	0	5½	2688
10	Levon Aronian	IGM ARM 2797	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	1	5½	2684
11	Hou Yifan	IGM CHN 2673	0	0	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	0	1	5	2664
12	Ivan Saric	IGM CRO 2666	½	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	1	½	½	*	½	1	4½	2641
13	Loek van Wely	IGM NED 2667	0	½	0	0	0	0	0	½	½	½	1	½	*	½	4	2610
14	Baadur Jobava	IGM GEO 2727	0	½	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	½	*	3	2536

Wei Yi is on his way to beat Belgian GM Bart Michiels in Round 11. The Chinese prodigy won eight games and drew five, a 2804 performance.



23...♘c3? The decisive mistake, which gives White the chance to win with a combination.
Instead, 23...♘b2!? is the engine's choice, but after 24.♗e2 g6 25.♗f2! ♖g7 26.♘e3 ♗e6 27.♖g1 Black remains under some pressure.

24.♘xc3 bxc3



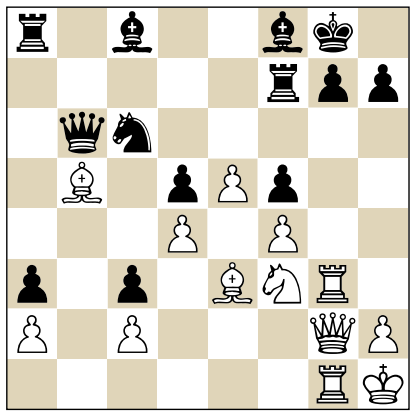
25.♗b5! I didn't miss this chance!

Now Black has great difficulty keeping his position together.

25...♕b6

After 25...♘b4 26.♖g1 ♕f8, 27.♗e8! was what my opponent had missed!: 27...g6 28.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 29.h4 ♖a6 30.h5, and White is winning.

26.♖g1 ♗f8



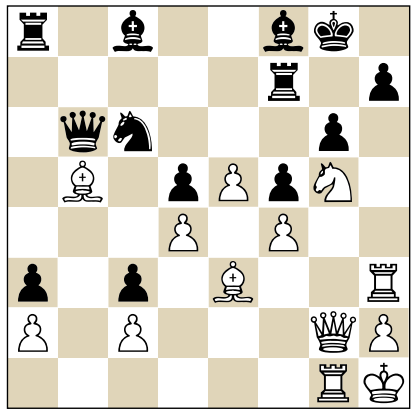
27.♖h3!

27.♘g5 also wins, but the text-move was easier.

27...g6

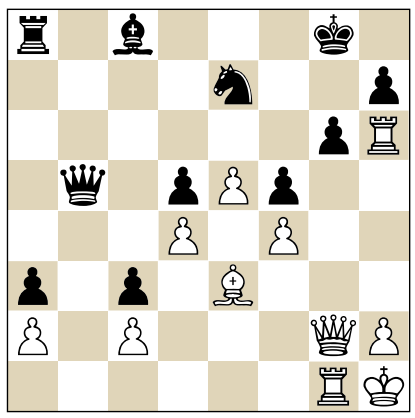
27...♕xb5 is met by 28.♖xh7! and 27...♘d8 by 28.♗e8! (also winning is 28.♘g5 ♕xb5 29.♘xh7 ♗b4 30.♘f6+ ♔f8 31.♖h8+ ♔e7 32.♕f1!! ♕c6 33.♖e8+ ♕xe8 34.♘xe8 ♗a6 35.♕b1!) 28...♖e7 29.♖xh7 ♔xh7 30.♗g6+ ♔g8 31.♕h3.

28.♘g5!



28...♕xb5 After 28...♖aa7 29.♘xf7 ♖xf7 30.♖xh7! ♖xh7 31.♕xd5+ (or 31.♕xg6+) White wins Black's knight and the game.

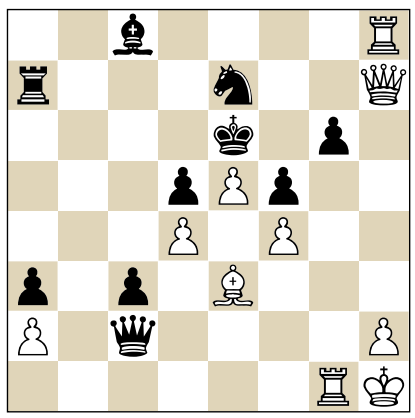
29.♘xf7 ♘e7 30.♘h6+ ♗xh6 31.♖xh6



31...♖a7

31...♕e8 is met by 32.♗f2! with the threat of a deadly infiltration via h4.

32.♕h3 ♕e2 33.♖xh7 ♕xc2 34.♖h8+ ♔f7 35.♕h7+ ♔e6



36.♖xg6+

And about to be checkmated, my opponent resigned. This was an exciting game and also my first win in the tournament. It was a good start and eventually I won the Challengers and qualified for next year's Tata Steel Masters. ■

VIVE LA DIFFÉRENCE!

'The difference between the sexes is remarkable in chess, but not any more so, to my mind, than any other field of cultural activity. Women cannot play chess, but they cannot paint either, or write, or philosophise. In fact, women have never thought or made anything worth considering.' – Jan Hein Donner

Russian communism may have brought untold misery to many millions, but at least, by very small consolation, this warped ideological system provided its citizens with good (and cheap) chess books. Recently, I was kindly presented with a 1957 copy of *Sovetskie Shahmatiski* by Elisaveta Ivanovna Bykova. How many of today's younger generation have even heard of the author – the 3rd Women's World Champion – I wonder? Alas, my deficient knowledge of the language is inadequate to provide a proper appreciation of the book's contents, but even a linguistic patzer can enjoy the veritable cornucopia of information – annotated games, crosstables, pen-portraits etc. – on largely forgotten figures in Soviet women's chess.

What struck me, alas, when leafing through the faded pages, was just how mediocre many of these players were. The era between the tragic death of Vera Menchik and the rise of Nona Gaprindashvili was particularly fallow. Indeed, could it be that the provocative, outrageously-sexist, bitingly-savage wit, Jan Hein Donner (see introductory quotation), had a point?

The towering Dutch Grandmaster, not for the only time in his literary life, might have overstated his case. Indeed, I suspect his unbending life-long convictions and prejudices – such as undue reverence for the two bishops – retarded his development somewhat. At university level, women are clearly now outperforming men in many disciplines. In my own family, my daughter was uniformly academically excellent, whereas my son (like his father before him) is both lazy and erratic. But within the narrow confines of chess, the jury is still out. It is not enough to point to the recently-retired Judit Polgar as evidence that women are as good as men, as the brilliant Hungarian is clearly an outlier. It would be equally erroneous to claim that (the pre-debilitating stroke) Viktor Kortchnoi proved that older players are no weaker than young.

According to Chris Fegan, of the UK charity Chess in Schools and Communities, girls at primary school level who take compulsory chess lessons are as good as, or sometimes even better than, boys of the same age. Unfortunately, this promising start is rapidly eroded and they soon lag far behind. Nevertheless, my gut feeling was that female chess players are both stronger and more numerous than they were when I first began competing. The latter is certainly true, but an excellent article by the Australian Richard Howard on the *chessbase.com* website last year demonstrated that, despite the enormous societal changes over 40 years, the gap between the leading males and females has remained fairly constant at nearly 250 Elo points – a yawning chasm in ability. That women seem stronger has more to do with universally higher standards, due to the ubiquity of computers, than any closing of the gender gap.

Howard also subtly critiques the most absurd theory to gain prominence in recent years, by Bilalic, Smallbone, McLeod and Gobet (which was submitted to the prestigious Royal Society, no less), that the rating sex difference is almost entirely attributable to participatory numbers (they comprise just 1% of the readership of this magazine). With the aid of a couple of bell curves this foursome neatly solve the eternal chess conundrum of why women lag behind their male counterparts, while simultaneously satisfying that irritating modern psychological urge to prove all of us, everywhere, are equal. Only a bunch of academics could come up with such a preposterous conclusion which flies in the face of observation, common sense and an enormous amount of empirical evidence too. Howard debunks this by showing that in countries like Georgia, where female participation is substantially higher than average, the gender gap actually *increases* – which is, of course, the exact opposite of what one would expect were the participatory hypothesis true. Interestingly, in the intellectually rigorous, but far more sociable game of bridge, where women make up the majority of club members, men still dominate the upper echelons. This would suggest that discrimination or overt sexism may be less of a factor in explaining the gender gap in chess than is commonly supposed.

The Tradewise Gibraltar Masters famously offers a large prize fund, with hefty additional prizes available to the fairer sex. Brian Callaghan, the genial driv-

‘In stark contrast, her younger sister, Judit Polgar, has never been in need of bombast and hyperbole to support a fragile ego, preferring always to let her magnificent results speak for themselves.’

ing-force behind the event, is unapologetic about his favouritism, although I have often wondered whether the practice is legal (not that anyone is complaining). After all, if, say, a company were to offer extra performance related bonuses only to those employees in possession of a penis, then they would (rightly) invite a raft of litigation. ‘Positive’ discrimination – an oxymoron, of course – is still discrimination. However, if one could prove that women were, in fact, at a biological disadvantage at chess, then potential criticism would be blunted. This might be an unpalatable conclusion to the militant feminists, but I suspect that Gibraltar, in which females have produced numerous superb performances over the years, does more for the women’s game than any amount of ideological grandstanding.

High female drop-out rates are something of a mystery to this writer, and I am not referring to the traditional reasons of marriage and motherhood. People tend to stick at what they are good at, which makes it surprising how many girls drift away from chess, for no obvious reason, despite having represented their country. If one can retain a place on the national team with minimal effort, then why quit? Should it not be a matter of pride and honour? And if patriotism is not important, then why not, at least, selfishly enjoy a few foreign trips?

A noteworthy but atypical example of premature retirement is Susan Polgar, who, a handful of games notwithstanding, effectively quit chess the moment she became Women’s World Champion in 1996, at the age of 27. Like an earlier World Champion of Hungarian Jewish origin – Bobby Fischer – her demands for defending her title, against Xie Jun in 1999, smacked of insincerity given that her actions, or rather lack of them, demonstrated she had no inclination to play at all. Substantial sponsorship perhaps played its part in luring her back to competitive chess for the 2004 Calvia Olympiad where, despite an inevitable degree of rustiness, she did surprisingly well. However, just two years later this brief flicker of playing activity abruptly ceased. Her husband and business manager, the twice bankrupt Paul Truong – who claims to have won the Vietnamese Junior (under 21) Championship at the age of 5, and to have been kidnapped by pirates on several occasions while narrowly escaping death by circling sharks – continues to run her successful, relentless, self-publicity machine. He has not, as yet, been abducted by aliens, but it is surely only a matter of time.

Given Susan Polgar’s undoubted genuine achievements – such as being the first woman to earn the Grandmaster title conventionally by making three norms – it is tragic that her brand is tarnished by extravagant and literally incredible claims like her supposed world record in 2005 of playing 1,131 games consecutively (winning 1,112!) in just 990 minutes. This works out at just 52.5 seconds per game – although it would be somewhat less when one takes into account bathroom breaks. Given that she was walking around the whole time, which causes a second or seconds to be lost on very move, for this record not to be fictitious would require an extraordinary high number of Scholar’s Mates. It is hard to understand why an emotionally stable individual would even imagine anyone else might believe this record to be genuine.

In stark contrast, her younger sister, Judit Polgar, has never been in need of bombast and hyperbole to support a fragile ego, preferring always to let her magnificent results speak for themselves. After a glorious trail-blazing career, smashing every record in sight, she has now moved on to different projects. Having demonstrated what women are capable of, her mantle has been passed to Hou Yifan. Whether the young Chinese World Champion will equal or surpass Judit’s achievements is a matter of conjecture, but she is, beyond doubt, the best hope to do so.

Men and women’s brains are hard-wired very differently, so why should they function in the same way? I don’t have the slightest problem in acknowledging that my wife possesses a much higher degree of emotional intelligence than I do. Likewise, she doesn’t feel embarrassed in asking me to manoeuvre the car out of our narrow garage. One is not better than the other, we just have different skills. It would be wonderful to see more girls playing chess, and at a higher level, but rather than fretting about inequality, perhaps we should just gracefully accept it as a fact. ■

When is the time to calculate?

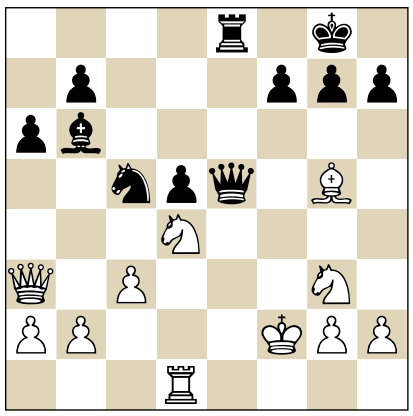
In this second of a series of instructional articles, **Parimarjan Negi** focuses on calculation. Successfully finding your way in complicated tactical situations is essential if you want to improve as a player. But equally important is to know *when* to calculate.

'I see only one move ahead, but it is always the correct one' – Capablanca

Without a doubt, calculation is one of the key elements of chess. Yet it's also widely misunderstood. Strong players seem to have an almost eerie way of knowing what's going to happen next in a game, and it's not uncommon to hear chess skill being measured in the number of moves ahead a person can calculate. This is further supported by the typical nature of a lot of tactical problems we solve when starting out as a player – more moves usually mean it's a harder problem. But the above self-assured quote by the third World Champion Capablanca perfectly exemplifies what tends to happen in practice – usually, it's a lot more important to see the wide range of possibilities and choose the correct path, rather than go deeper and deeper into the forest of complications. The real debate about calculating is: how to decide when we should calculate?

In his seminal classic, *Thinking Like a Grandmaster*, Alexander Kotov suggests a powerful approach to achieve accuracy in your calculations. His central thesis throughout the book is to develop tools to think correctly, rather than focus on any particular mistake. This is an extremely useful strategy, as mistakes are rarely identical, but the thought processes behind them often are. Kotov's method of calculation can be summed up in over-simplified form as: look for all sensible 'candidate moves', moves that come into consideration, then do the same process over again from your opponent's point of view in order to create 'variation trees'. At some point when you are satisfied, you stop and choose the optimal branch.

Although it is a classic, the book has come under a lot of criticism because, ironically, most grandmasters don't really think this way. Our thinking is much less organized, involves a lot of going back and forth, repetition, missed ideas, and general aimlessness. In fact, Kotov's approach might be an idealized state that is almost impossible to achieve in practice. He seems to be too eager to have an all-encompassing theory and provide an almost rigorous algorithm for finding good moves. But this doesn't quite lend itself to generating creative ideas. And explicitly keeping track of variation trees sounds a bit cumbersome. Yet Kotov's book is full of extremely useful examples, and a simplified version of his approach remains extremely useful for solving tactical problems:



Ragozin-Boleslavsky
Gagra 1953

An excellent example of the power of the 'candidate-move' approach. I'll describe below what I feel is a typical and good way to arrive at the correct decision. White's position seems to be on the verge of collapse. Black has got dangerous threats with knight jumps and the e-file battery.

The first thing you naturally consider, and should calculate, is whether you can keep things together after 24.♗c1. Once you find the strong idea 24...♕f6+ 25.♔g1 ♘d3! it's easy to see that White's position is absolutely collapsing, as happened in the game.

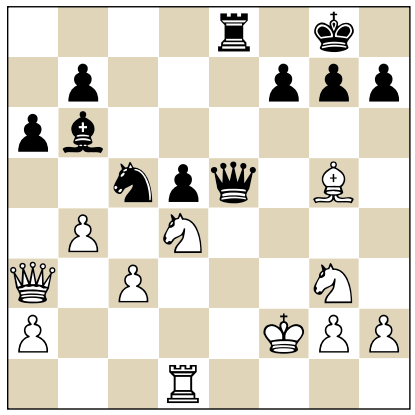
25.♘f3 is a better defence, when Black needs to find the accurate 25...♕g6! threatening ...♕c2 to win, but 25.♘f3 is so ugly that you wouldn't want to consider it unless it's an absolute must. So it's easy to see that you don't want to move the g5-bishop, yet at first it's hard to imagine how you can avoid it. Which brings us back to the original position.

For now, it's quite easy to dismiss the other candidate moves Kotov mentions, e.g. ♕b4, h4, ♘f3, ♗d2, without even analysing them, as they just seem worse than 24.♗c1 by comparison or require minimal calculation in order to be refuted.

So is there some other option? This is where your experience in solving such tactical positions comes into play. Once you've solved enough positions, you notice patterns, and ideas spring to mind when you start looking for them:

24.b4!

The moment you see this move, it's attractive. You solve the problem of not moving the bishop by an attractive counterattacking move. Of course, even if you find an attractive candidate move while calculating, it might not actually work – so it's very important to calculate the additional lines with a level head. Here, the lines are quite easy to figure out once you see the idea:



24...♕xg5!

The best reply. 24...♘e6? 25.♗e3, and everything is safe.

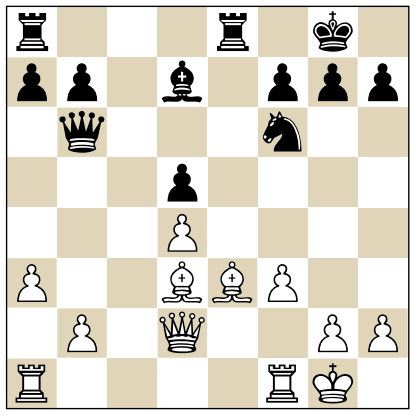
24...♘e4+? 25.♘xe4 ♕xe4 26.♕c1 again; all protected and White should win.

24...♘d3+? 25.♖xd3 ♕e1+ 26.♔f3, and White wins.

25.bxc5 ♕e3+ 26.♔f1 ♕f4+ 27.♔g1 ♕e3+ And Black just about survives with perpetual check.

When to calculate?

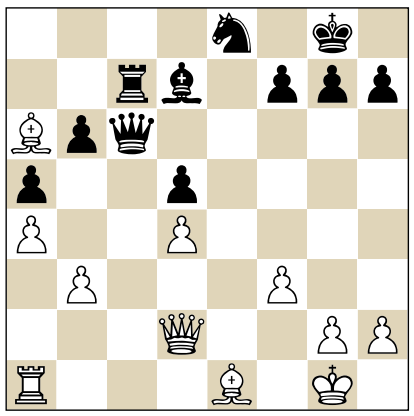
Most tactical problems follow a typical structure: you calculate a lot of natural lines, discover the problems you are facing, and then after finding the key idea, everything else just magically falls into place. One complaint I always had was that in tactical positions that you are asked to solve, I would know that a solution existed, whereas in a game I often seem to calculate pointlessly. Therefore, it's crucial to know *when to calculate*. In most of the game, positional rules apply: you develop pieces, keep your king safe, occupy the centre and shuffle around, often looking for aesthetic merit – how does my position look? Are my pieces well placed? Do I have any obvious weaknesses, or ugly spots in my position? There are good and bad plans, but generally speaking, nothing too bad would happen even if you have no idea of what you're doing. So it's counterproductive to fuss about your moves as long as you aren't provoking any confrontations. I'd describe this as 'normal' chess, but then, often brutally suddenly, there's a transition to a 'confrontation' between the two players. Here tactics reign supreme and the cost of a mistake is very high. That is when you need to put on your 'concrete' thinking hat and focus on candidate moves, precision, tactics.



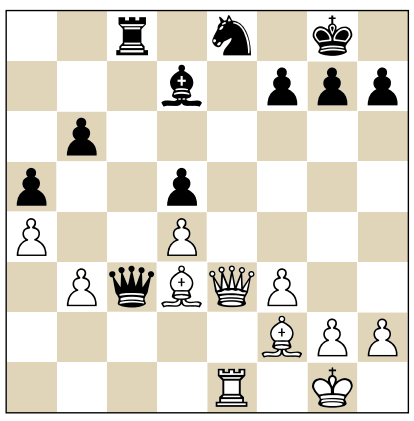
Giri-Antipov
Doha 2014

Not much has happened in the game so far, and we have a fairly typical position. White has a pleasant bishop pair, but he can't really use it immediately, and there are just far too many plans to choose from without really changing the nature of the position. The next part of the game is a typical 'normal chess' phase:

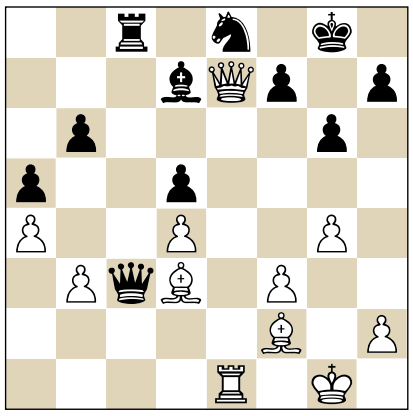
17.a4 a5 18.♖fc1 ♖ec8 19.♖c5 ♕e6 20.♗f2 b6 21.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 22.b3 ♕c6 23.♗e1 ♘e8 24.♗a6 ♖c7



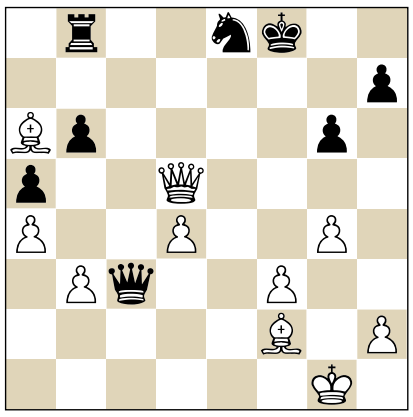
25.♗d3 Obviously, the manoeuvre ♗a6-♗d3 hasn't achieved much – I imagine Anish thought he could play 25.♗g3, but noticed 25...♕c3! so he just tracked back. Not that such an inaccuracy does much to change the position.
25...♕f6 26.♗f2 ♕c6 27.♖e1 ♕c3 28.♕e3 ♖c8 The first signs of a transition marker... Here, for instance, 29.♕e7 is a very tempting move, and Black's position would absolutely collapse if he didn't have 29...♘f6! with the idea of ...♖e8. So White continues to improve his position with:



29.g4 Black completely fails to recognize that there are some tactical motifs in his position. He ought to have been careful, but continues with the natural
29...g6? Threatening 30...♕xb3. Black is beginning to play concretely himself without noticing the tactical motifs he has created. The text-move would have been an ideal move, but no doubt Anish had seen that it would take away the possibility of ...♘f6, thereby removing his only way to hold his position together.
30.♕e7!

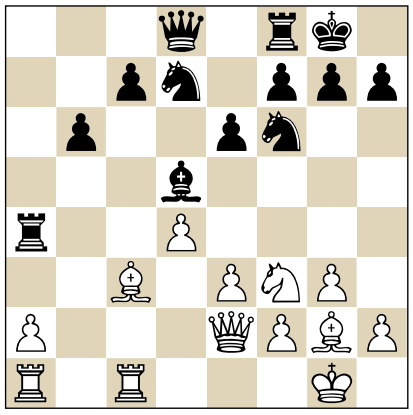


30...♗e6 30...♗c6 is better, but after 31.♖e3 the position isn't much fun either. Black's idea of going after the b3-pawn clearly hasn't worked out.
31.♗a6 And all of a sudden, Black's position collapses!
31...♖b8 32.♖xe6 fxe6 33.♕xe6+ ♔f8 34.♕xd5



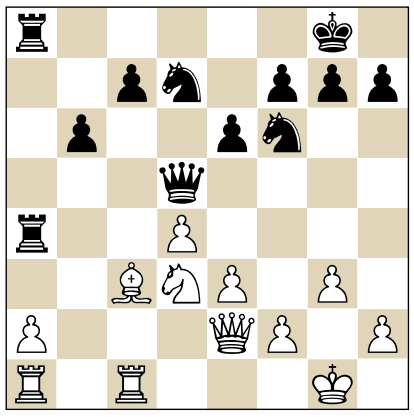
And Black soon resigned.

I play quite rarely these days, but while planning this article, I coincidentally played my first serious event in six months. And in one of the games, I noticed a similar pattern:

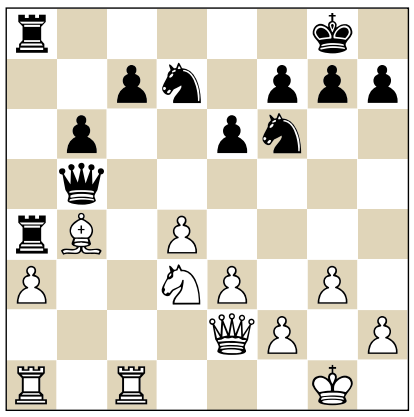


Bregadze-Negi
Burlingame 2015

We've had a slow game, and I think I did reasonably well out of the opening. Not much is happening, and even though my position is more pleasant, it's hard to see a clear way to break through. The computer isn't particularly impressed by a few of my next moves, but I just continued playing what felt to be natural, even if somewhat imprecise moves.
15...♕a8 16.♘e1 ♖c8 17.♗xd5 ♕xd5 18.♘d3 ♖ca8



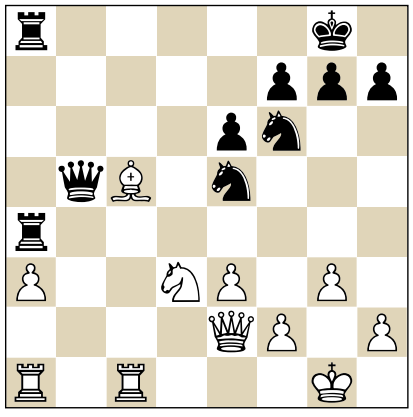
19.♗b4 An interesting moment. The computer likes White's move, but it felt very suspect to me during the game. He could have played 19.♗b2, attacking c7, followed by a3, and maintain the same type of position. Here he finds a more novel and active approach involving my back rank (19...♖xa2 20.♖xa2 ♖xa2 21.♖xc7! threatening mate with 22.♖c8).
At the same time, the bishop on b4 is temptingly misplaced, and I saw all kinds of tactical motifs around the pin on the d3-knight.
19...♕b5 So I began calculating seriously. **20.a3** Forced. Now Black had different options, and I chose the most forcing continuation, since it used the motifs in a nice way.



20...c5!? 21.dxc5 bxc5 22.♗xc5

The bishop remains hanging a bit, while now I turn my attention to the kingside weaknesses and the pin.

22...♘e5

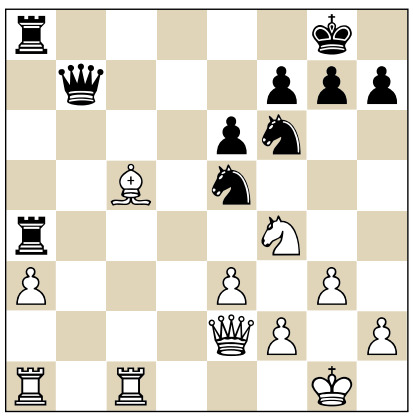


23.♘f4

As it turns out, it was time for White to realize the danger his position was in, and start thinking concretely: thinking about candidate moves.

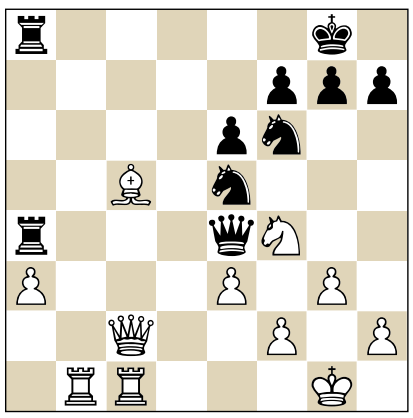
He had the amazing defence: 23.♖d1!! ♘xd3 24.♗e7! ♘d5 25.♖xd3, and 25...♘xe7 is impossible due to 26.♖d8+!. Again, not very hard if you know you're looking for it, but impossible to find otherwise.

23...♕b7!



This doesn't look enviable at all. White had missed my 25...g5 while calculating.

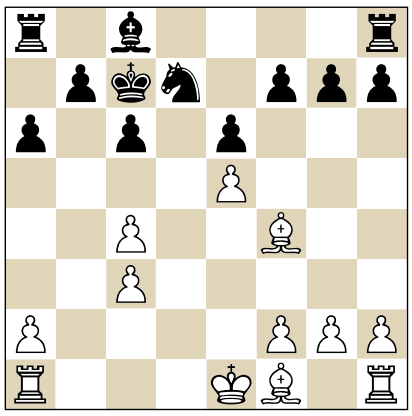
24.♖ab1 ♕e4 25.♕c2



25...g5! 26.♕xe4 ♘xe4 27.♘h5 ♘d3 And I won the exchange, which I eventually converted quite easily with some help from my opponent.

As you saw in the previous game, forcing confrontations on my opponent wasn't even technically any better than other lines if he had found the best defence. But it posed him some problems, and he didn't handle them correctly (candidate moves again!). Thus, this approach: not worrying about playing correct moves and conserving energy, followed by diving into tactics when I noticed him wavering and allowing tactical motifs, provided me an excellent guideline as to how to think during the game. It often ends up saving a lot of time and energy – you don't waste time calculating variations when you know it's not going to make a big difference.

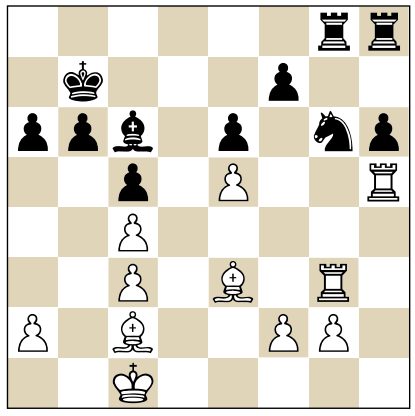
It can happen that you just continue to play in 'normal chess' mode and miss a very crucial moment. This doesn't just happen to weak players; sometimes World Championships are decided by such a state of mind.



Carlsen-Anand
Sochi 2014 (6)

White's position may be somewhat preferable, but nothing dramatic. Now we see a period of 'normal chess' in which Carlsen slowly outplays Vishy by essentially shuffling around the pieces better than he does.

13.h4 b6 14.h5 h6 15.0-0-0 ♗b7 16.♖d3 c5 17.♖g3 ♖ag8 18.♗d3 ♘f8 19.♗e3 g6 20.hxg6 ♘xg6 21.♖h5 ♗c6 22.♗c2 ♔b7



23.♖g4?!

It kind of looks nice just to put the rook there, and perhaps Magnus had a deeper positional idea, but it was perfectly well placed on g3, and he could've continued with ♔d2, ♔e2 etc., as he did later.

Now the rook is undefended against occasional knight jumps, but the knight has no good square, so it's a very subtle point, and perhaps not even worth noticing. Especially at this level, you don't expect your opponent to just allow simple tactical tricks, so there is no reason to move out of the 'normal chess' phase.

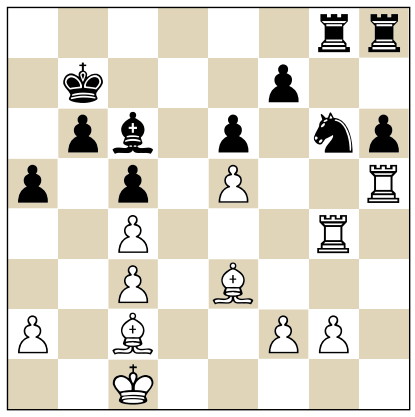
23...a5 24.♗d1

Hinting at Carlsen's idea; perhaps he wanted to play g3 ?

24...♖d8 Preventing g3.

25.♗c2 Oh well, it doesn't really matter. Specific moves usually don't have a high cost in this phase.

25...♖dg8



26.♔d2??

Magnus continues to play in the same mode as well – slowly improving his position by shuffling around his pieces. The tactical difference in the position is very subtle, but once it strikes you, the tactics themselves are very easy. Unfor-

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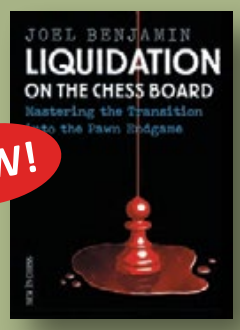

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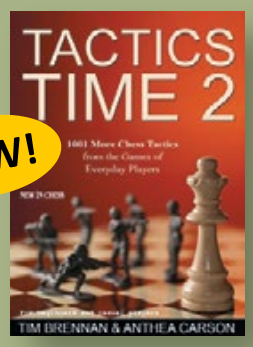

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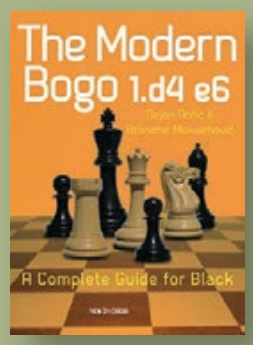

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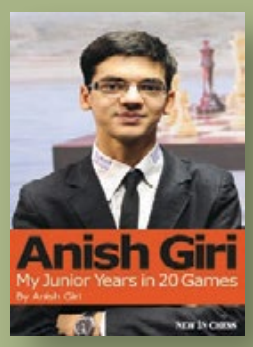

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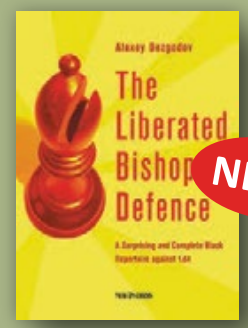

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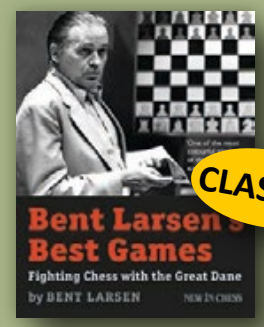

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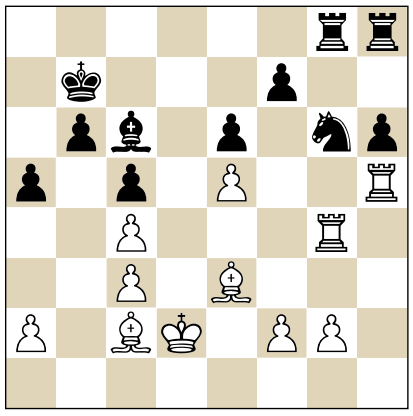
tunately for him, Vishy didn't grasp this transition and continued normally with:



26...a4

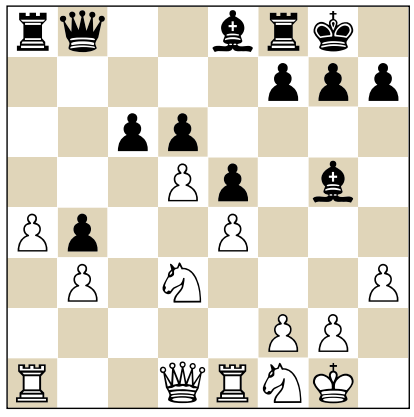
Without really thinking in a concrete manner. Of course he soon realized that he had missed 26...♘xe5! 27.♖xg8 ♘xc4+ 28.♔d3 ♘b2+, and Black is just almost winning.

His bad position, together with the psychological trauma of having missed such a line, had Vishy collapse rather quickly.

As you can see, often the hardest part is to recognize such transitions. The calculations don't have to be that hard – once you realize you should look for them. After all, we aren't computers, and it's nice to be a little lazy and not put in that effort every move of the game. Thus, it's essential to do a lot of tactical exercises so you can recognize these transitional moments instantly. Through various tactical motifs, such as back ranks, unprotected or misplaced pieces, weak kings, or geometric motifs (just to name a few), you heighten your sense of when the moment is there to stop and calculate.

I feel it's a good habit to do a quick candidate-move search occasionally even during normal play – just to make sure that you don't miss an obvious tactical resource. But you don't have to do it beyond one move – it's quite enough to realize whether some line creates tactical possibilities or just continues the same type of position.

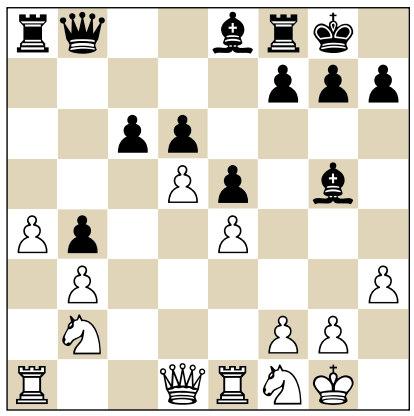
Often, things aren't as obvious, and you've got a choice between continuing in 'normal chess' mode or transitioning to a confrontation. In contrast to the normal phase, it's important to realize that when initiating a confrontation must not focus too much on the aesthetics of the position – how do my pieces look, centre, development – instead you need to focus on the specifics – candidate moves, precise calculation. It's also usually a bad idea to initiate such forced play against Fabiano, as I can say from personal experience:



Caruana-Saric
Wijk aan Zee 2015

It's been a slow game, full of shuffling, and strategic ideas. White continues in the same vein with:

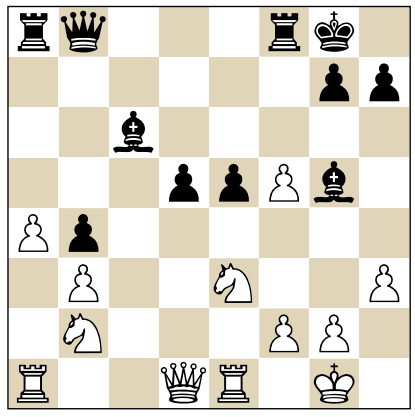
27.♘b2 Now Black notices an interesting and very aesthetically pleasing way to force things. But he fails to calculate the not-so-very-hard-to-find concrete variations because he's blinded by the aesthetic appeal of the centre, bishops and activity, while White's knights appear too passive and seem to be asking to be punished.



27...f5

There isn't much calculation required to continue with normal play: 27...cxd5 (or even 27...c5!? followed by ...f5) 28.♕xd5 ♗d7, when ...♗e6 gives Black a fairly comfortable position. The a4-pawn could be dangerous in the future, but for now ...♗e6 and ...♖c8 are coming.

28.dxc6 ♗xc6 29.exf5 d5 30.♘e3!



30...♕b7

Black continues to ignore concrete calculations in favour of aesthetically pleasing moves. He's punished swiftly, since after the simple

31.♘d3 ♖ae8 32.♕g4

he is just left a pawn down, and losing another pawn on b4. Soon it was all over for Saric.

Most of us have a natural tendency to generate such confrontations – because then we calculate and we feel in familiar territory, whereas the slow nature of 'normal' play often leaves us wondering whether we're playing correctly. Also, some ideas, as in the Saric game above, have such an appeal that they are just screaming to be played.

Conclusion

Don't burn yourself out early with too much calculation. Follow the positional rules, calculate 1-2 moves ahead, and play your natural moves while being on a lookout for tactical motifs. In this stage of the game, you should resist the urge to force things just because you want to 'do something', instead worry about placing your pieces nicely so they are ready to strike when confrontations occur. At the same time, there is no correct or wrong move, so there is no reason to be stressed. But when you spot tactical motifs in the position, then it's time to dig deep, and begin calculations – using all the tactics training that you hopefully did. ■

Around midnight Carlsen wins the Armageddon game

Eric van Reem

Chess tradition very much alive in Baden-Baden

ERIC VAN REEM

The hour's getting late and Magnus Carlsen tries to concentrate for the tiebreak against Arkadij Naiditsch.

With the participation of Magnus Carlsen, the 2015 Grenke Chess Classic continued a rich chess tradition that started in 1870 with an international tournament won by Adolf Anderssen and was kept alive in the past decade with the supremacy of OSG Baden-Baden in the German Bundesliga. Despite a loss against Arkadij Naiditsch (him again!), the World Champion managed to emerge as tournament winner, but only after a long, long day at the office.

ERIC VAN REEM

The World Champion also won the second tournament since his successful title defence in Sochi last November.

'For many years I have considered it a very sad state of affairs that since the War, the great chess tournaments, which were held frequently before, have altogether ceased. In the good old days before the War, a great international tournament was held in Germany at least every two years'. That's what Dr. Siegbert Tarrasch wrote in his book about the Baden-Baden tournament in 1925 that was won by Alexander Alekhine.

Today, the Chess Meeting in Dortmund is the only annual elite event on German soil. You may safely call it a venerable institution, as this summer the 43rd edition will be played. The Grenke Chess Classic is still a young event, but there can be no doubt that Wolfgang Grenke and his team in Baden-Baden have the ambition to become a respected fixture on the international calendar.

This year's tournament was unmistakably an important step in that direction, with a top-notch line-up. The main attraction was World Champion Magnus Carlsen, who played his first tournament in Germany since Dortmund 2009. And there were three more top-10 players: Fabiano Caruana and Levon Aronian, who came almost straight from the Tata Steel Masters, and the winner of the first Grenke Chess Classic in 2013, Vishy Anand. The field was completed by Etienne Bacrot (winner of the Baden-Baden Open in 2013), Arkadij Naiditsch and David Baramidze (who qualified from the 2nd Grenke Classic in 2014, in which only German players took part), and Michael Adams, a long-time member of the Baden-Baden Bundesliga team.

Why was no Russian invited to Baden-Baden, which is often called 'the most Russian city in Germany'? Here the Russian aristocracy used to take the waters, and writers like Ivan Turgenev and Fyodor Dostoevsky

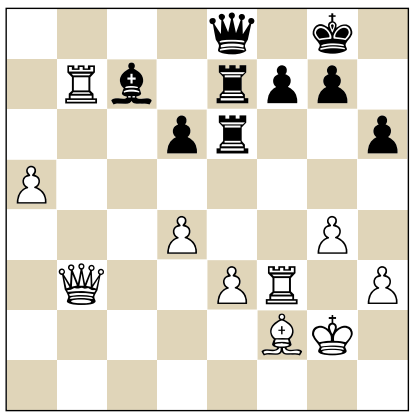
lived in Baden-Baden. These days, the spa has a partnership with Sochi and Yalta. However, the political situation in Russia and Ukraine has not failed to have its effects: from January to September 2014 there were 10,000 fewer overnight stays by Russians, a 16.2 per cent decline compared to the previous year. For the Grenke Financial Services Group, political reasons are not a decisive factor, but commercial reasons often do play a role when players are selected. As Christian Bossert, the President of the Baden-Baden Chess Centre, which served as the venue, explained: 'Since the company has no branches in Russia, it makes no sense to invite a Russian player'.

The drawing of lots took place in one of the best hotels in Germany, the 'Brenners', a five-star grand hotel with a rich history. Since most of the players, trainers and commentators came from various Bundesliga matches that weekend, a short no-nonsense ceremony was held. The players just had to pick an envelope with a starting number, had a glass of champagne (or mineral water) and that was it!

The first two rounds saw only one decisive game. On the second day Magnus Carlsen won against his Sochi second Michael Adams and increased his score with the white pieces against the Englishman to a whopping 7½/8!

ERIC VAN REEM

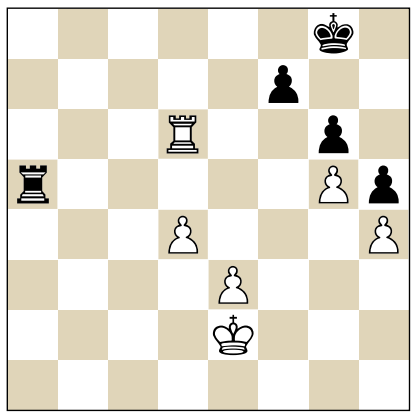
A no-nonsense opening ceremony. At the 5-star 'Brenners' the players just had to pick an envelope with a starting number, had a glass of champagne (or mineral water) and that was it!



Carlsen-Adams
Baden-Baden 2015 (2)
position after 35.♖xb7

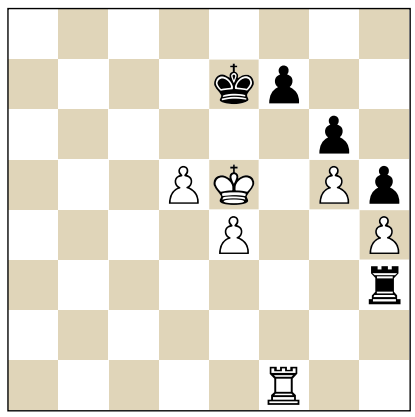
35...♕a8? Carlsen had just won a pawn on b7. Adams probably did not like 35...♗xa5 after 36.♖b8 ♗d8 37.♗h4 ♖d7, with a cramped position, but that might be the best way to defend. 'It's already gone by then,' Adams commented later.

36.♖b5 ♖e8 37.♕d5 ♕xd5 38.♖xd5 ♖b8 39.♗g3 g6 40.h4 ♖a8 41.♗e1 ♖e4 42.g5 h5 43.♖b5 ♖a7 44.♔f1 ♖e8 45.♔e2 ♖ea8 46.♖f6 ♖a6 47.♗b4 ♗xa5 48.♖xa5 ♖xa5 49.♗xa5 ♖xa5 50.♖xd6



This rook and pawn endgame is a clear win for White. He will simply push his pawns and support them with his king.

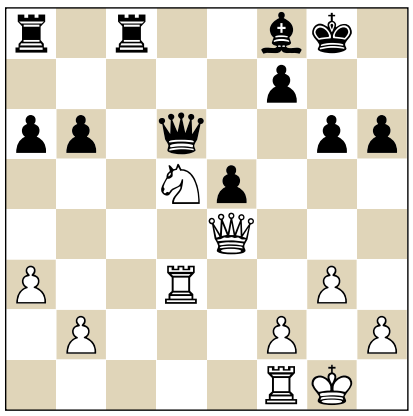
50...♔f8 51.♖f6 ♖a3 52.♔f3 ♔e7 53.♔e4 ♖a5 54.♖f4 ♖b5 55.d5 ♖b3 56.♔d4 ♖a3 57.e4 ♖b3 58.♔e5 ♖d3 59.♖f1 ♖h3



60.♖a1! ♖xh4 61.d6+ ♔d7 62.♖a7+ ♔e8 63.♖a8+ ♔d7 64.♖f8 1-0

Michael Adams immediately bounced back in the third round to beat David Baramidze with the white pieces. In the same round, Fabiano Caruana won a weird game against Levon Aronian.

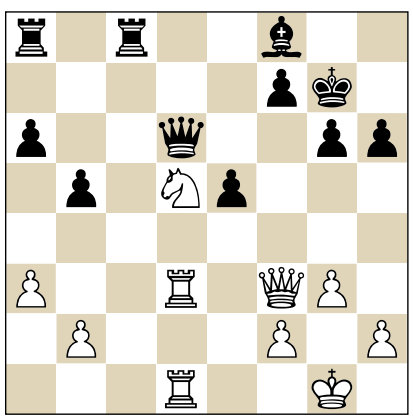
The words that were used most in the press conference after the game were 'stupid', 'weird' and 'silly'.



Aronian-Caruana
Baden-Baden 2015 (3)
position after 28...♗f8

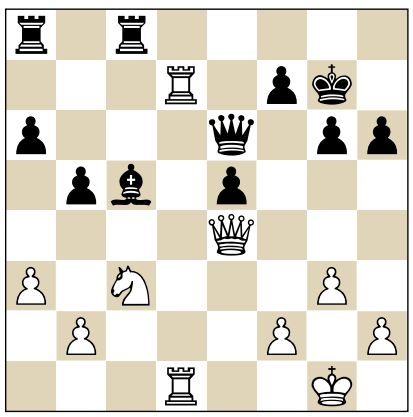
Aronian, who is a pawn down, tried **29.♖fd1,** although he could have taken a repetition after 29.♘f4 e.g. 29...♕f6 30.♘d5 ♕d6 etc.

29...b5 30.♕f3 ♔g7



31.♘c3? In time-trouble, Aronian missed 31.♘c7! ♕xc7 32.♖d7 ♕c4 33.♖1d5! ♗e7 34.♖xe7 ♖f8 35.♖dxe5, which is slightly better for White.

31...♕e6 32.♖d7 ♗c5 33.♕e4



33...♖a7 Aronian: 'I completely forgot about 33...♖a7 – a weird blunder'.

34.♖d8? Black wins another pawn, and the rest is easy for Black.

34...♖xd8 35.♖xd8 ♗xf2+ 36.♔g2 36.♔xf2? ♕f6+. **36...♗b6 37.♖d2 ♖c7 38.♕a8 ♗d4 39.♘e2 ♖d7 40.b4 h5 0-1**

The game of the third round was the epic battle between local hero Arkadij Naiditsch and World Champion Magnus Carlsen. As you will remember, Naiditsch beat Carlsen with the black pieces in Round 7 of the 2014 Chess Olympiad, in the only decisive game in the match Norway-Germany. Obviously Carlsen was highly motivated to rub out this opprobrium and boldly sacrificed a bishop for two pawns on move 10! On Twitter, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave nicknamed Carlsen 'Magnus Jobava'.

NOTES BY
Arkadij Naiditsch

KF 13.5 – B06
Arkadij Naiditsch
Magnus Carlsen
Baden-Baden 2015 (3)

A day earlier, I had managed to save a very bad rook ending against Anand after totally misplaying the opening. So I was in a very good mood, knowing that my game against Magnus was going to be an interesting and a fighting one, like probably almost all the games of the World Champion.

I had not really been sure whether to expect a Berlin, or maybe some Spanish variation or even a Sicilian. Everything was possible. I knew that Magnus wanted to win against me very much after our encounter at the Olympiad in Tromsø last year.

1.e4 g6

A big surprise already on move 1 ☺.

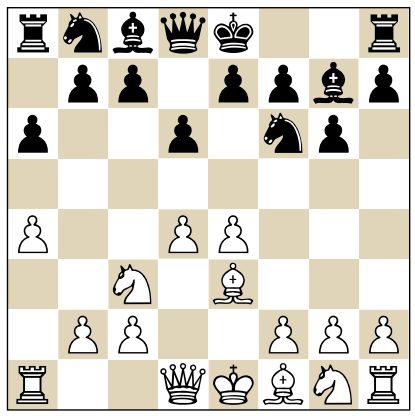
2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d6 4.♗e3

For many years now, I have always gone for the same set-up against the Pirc and I cannot explain why I still have such a great score with it.

4...a6 Well, not the most central opening. I was not sure if Magnus had prepared something against my usual 5.h4, or whether he had just woken up shortly before the game and wanted to play 'something'. In any case I decided to play something safer.

5.a4 Of course, 5.a4 is nothing new. It has been played in a lot of games, also at top level.

5...♘f6



6.h3!? I played this fast, but it was not my preparation. I knew from many similar lines that it is very nice for White to play g4/♗g2 if possible, so why not now?! Of course, I also keep the option of playing ♘f3 and returning to the usual set-up.

6...0-0 After 6...d5 7.e5 ♘e4 the position is quite unclear.

7.g4 Logical and normal. 7.♘f3 would also be 'normal', but I thought why not put the World Champion under pressure a bit?

7...e5 About this move I am not sure at all. In my opinion, a more 'usual' continuation was 7...c5 8.d5 e6 9.♗g2 exd5 10.exd5 ♘bd7 11.♘ge2, and maybe White is a bit better, but the game has only just begun.

8.d5 c6

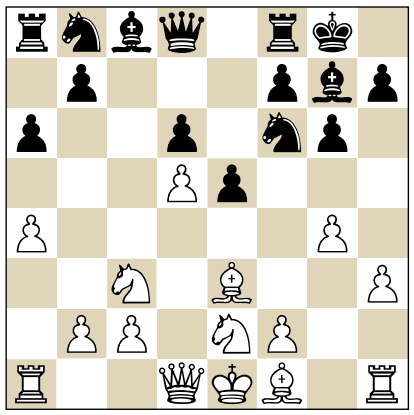
Black has to search for some play.

9.♘ge2

I thought that my knight has to be placed on e2 anyway, and the bishop from f1 might find another square, depending on Black's play.

9...cxd5 10.exd5

I was quite happy with my position here. My plan is simple: ♘g3, then g5 and ♘ce4, with a large positional advantage.

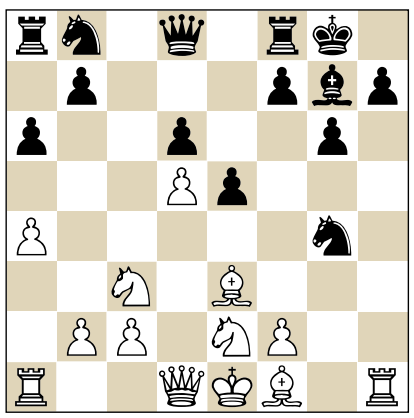


10...♗xg4?!

This move came as quite a shock, but maybe it was not such a bad practical decision. It was easy to see that my opponent did not like his position too much. He had spent a lot of time on his last three moves, and it is never easy to play a position in which you don't really know what to do next.

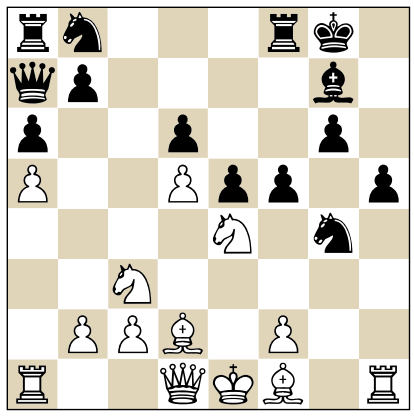
11.hxg4 ♘xg4

Here I had my first long think. I was sure that I was much better, but to know it and to find the right way to continue are two different things. Black's idea is very clear: to play ...♘d7/...f5 and probably ...e4/...♘e5.



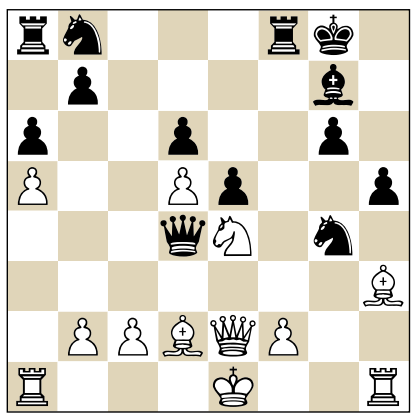
12.♕d2?!

Not a bad move, but a stupid decision. I had been calculating 12.♗d2! for a long time. If I could save the dark-squared bishop, the game would be almost over. Now 12...♕b6 is the only move. After 13.♘e4 f5 the following line seems to be quite forced: 14.♘2c3 h5 15.a5 ♕a7.



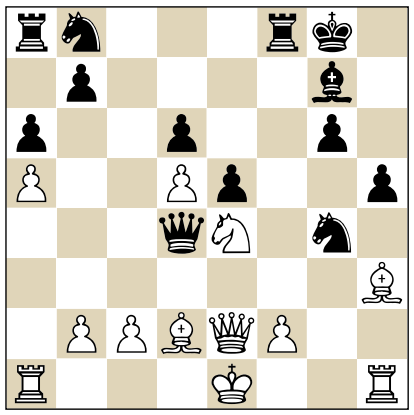
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

This position I reached fast, but I could not find an exact way to win. So I thought I had to go 16.♗h3 fxe4 17.♘xe4 ♕d4 (17...♘xf2 won't work, of course: 18.♗e6+ ♔h7 19.♖xh5+) 18.♕e2.



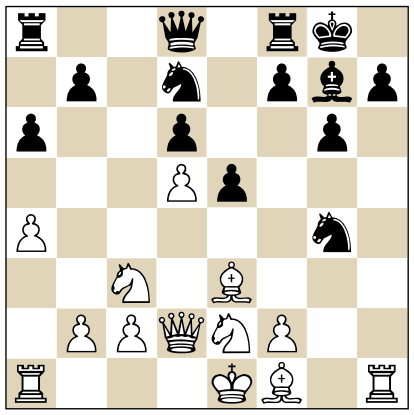
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

I had seen the line till here and I thought I should have an extremely dangerous attack. But instead of having a piece for two pawns, I am a pawn down. Anyway, I should have gone for this.



12...♘d7

Of course, it was too early to play 12... f5 13.♗g5 ♕b6 14.0-0-0 and White is almost winning.



13.♘e4!

A good move. We are entering a forced line.

13...f5

It is not that good for Black to play 13...♘xe3 14.♕xe3, when my queen will find a great position on h3.

14.♗g5 ♕b6 15.♗h3

Using the moment that Black cannot take on e4.

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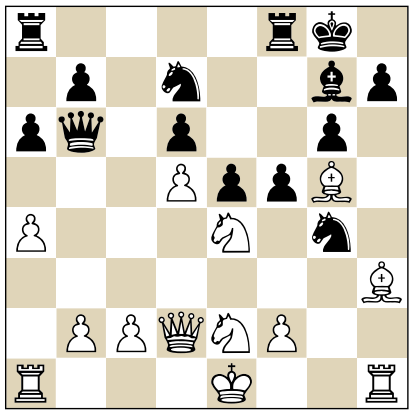
ERIC VAN REEM

Arkadij Naiditsch: 'I can tell you guys that there is no better feeling than beating the World Champion in a difficult, six-hour game! ☺ '



15...♘df6

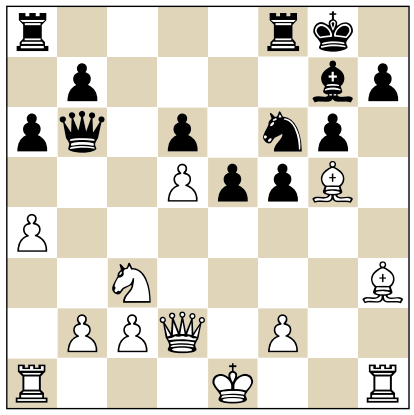
15...fxe4 does not work for Black: 16.♗xg4 ♕xf2+ 17.♔d1, and I have the idea of playing ♕e1 next.

16.♘xf6+ ♘xf6

I am still a piece up, but Black is quite well developed and ...♘e4 is threatening. I had to decide whether to give up the dark-squared bishop or not.

17.♘c3

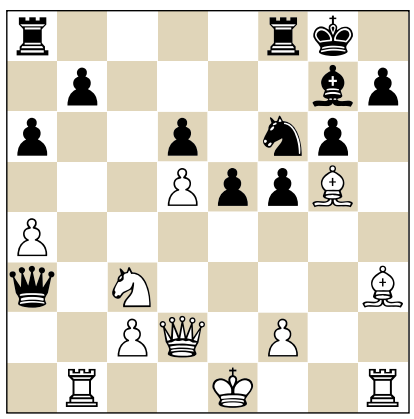
A good practical decision, I think. The other option was 17.♗xf6 ♗xf6 18.c3, but I was not sure if I was actually better here after 18...♖ac8. Black's pawn structure is very solid, and if I castle queenside to attack the black king, the a4-pawn will get weak. I found things very complicated here.



17...♕xb2!

It doesn't matter what happens next, but Black needs to take on b2. If I had had time to castle queenside, my attack would have got very dangerous.

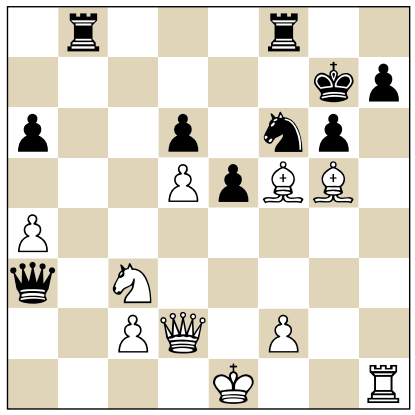
18.♖b1 ♕a3



19.♖xb7?! Too greedy. Much stronger was 19.♖b3! ♕a1+ (after 19...♕c5 20.♗e3 ♕c7 I have 21.0-0, followed by ♖fb1, and of course Black has three pawns for the piece, but I believe that White is doing clearly better here, as the b7-pawn is a serious weakness) 20.♕d1 ♕xd1+ 21.♔xd1, and I think that this endgame should be better for White.

19...♖f7?!

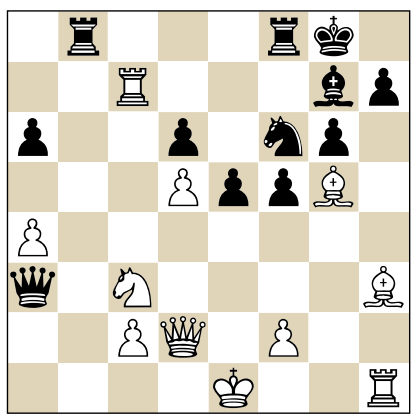
Black is not taking his chances. We both saw that 19...♖ab8! should probably be the move, but as Carlsen told me he had dismissed it because of 20.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 21.♗xf5



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

(I was not sure at all if White is winning here) 21...gxf5 22.♗xf6+ ♔xf6. Now White has a lot of moves, but the position seems to be just a draw: 23.♕h6+ (one of the possible lines) 23...♔e7 24.♕e6+ ♔d8 25.♖xh7 ♕xc3+ 26.♔f1 ♕c4+ 27.♔g2 ♕g4+ 28.♔h2 ♕f4+, with a perpetual.

I had two ideas: to just play 20.♖xb8 ♖xb8 and 21.♗g2, but then most of my advantage may be gone, or to play 20.♖c7



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

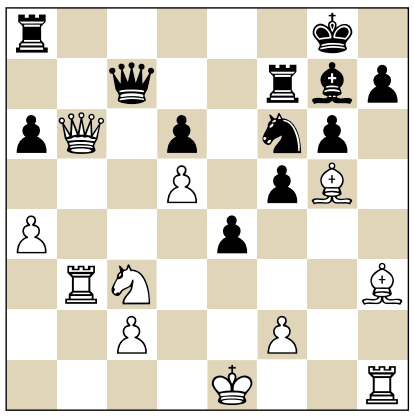
but Black has the very beautiful 20...♘e4! 21.♘xe4 ♕f3 (with the threat of 22...♖b1) 22.0-0 ♕xh3, and here, too, the position is just equal.

20.♖b3 ♕c5 21.♕e3

Trying to reach an endgame.

21...♕c7 22.♕b6 e4

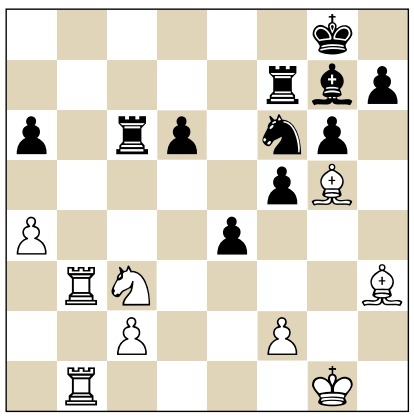
Activating the bishop on g7.



23.♕c6! I was very happy to find this move. Computers may have a different opinion and suggest moves such as 23.a5, but with so little time on the clock I found a way to enter a clearly better endgame, which seemed to give me play for two results.

23...♖c8 24.0-0 Black is going to have three pawns for the piece.

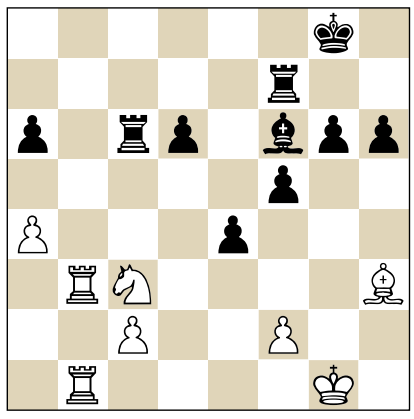
24...♕xc6 25.dxc6 ♖xc6 26.♖fb1



But the main problem of Black's position is the pawn on a6. If I manage to win it, the number of pawns on the kingside just won't matter.

26...h6 27.♗xf6 ♗xf6

In case of 27...♖xf6 28.♘d5 ♖f7 29.♖b6 Black's position looks on the verge of being lost.

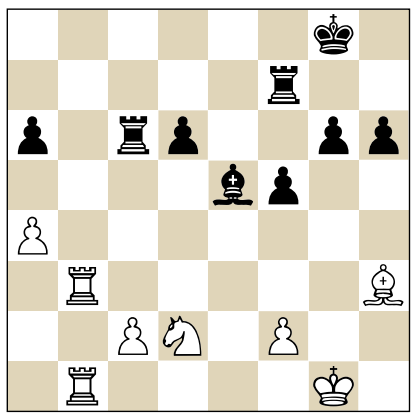


28.♘xe4! Maybe Carlsen had underestimated this move.

28...♗e5

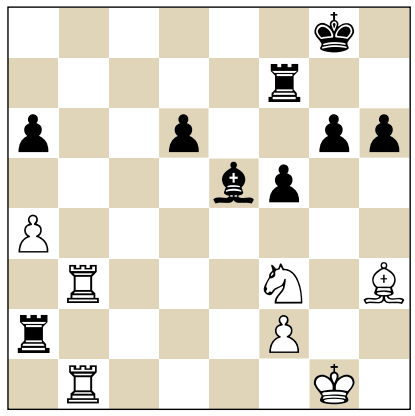
In case of 28...fxe4 29.♗e6, Black has nothing better than 29...♔f8 30.♗xf7 ♔xf7 31.♖b6, and he has no good way to defend his pawns. The position is probably just lost.

29.♘d2 My knight is going to occupy a great position on f3.

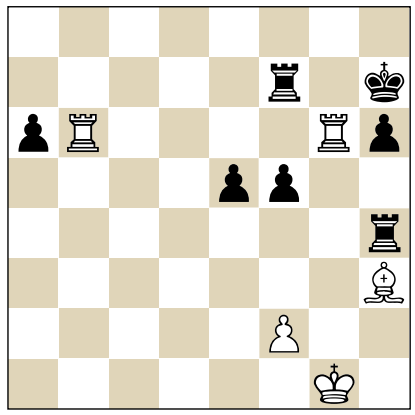


29...♖xc2 30.♘f3 All I need to do now is to deploy my bishop with ♗f1.

30...♖a2 No better is 30...♗f6 31.♗f1, and the a6-pawn is going to fall.



31.♗g2? With around 7 minutes on the clock, I thought for about five of them and played this horrible move. My first idea had been to play 31.♘xe5 dxe5 32.♖b4, followed by ♗f1, and I thought my winning chances should be very good. But then I started calculating the tempting 32.♖b6 ♖xa4 33.♖xg6+ ♔h7 34.♖bb6 ♖h4.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Up to here it is forced and Black's position looks lost, but how to win it?!

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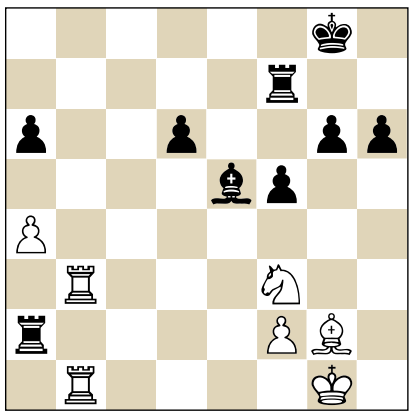
I continued my calculation: 35.♔g2 ♖h5 (Black wants to play 36...♖g5+) 36.♖bf6 ♖xf6 37.♖xf6 ♔g7, and suddenly I was not at all sure whether this was actually winning or just a draw: 38.♖xa6 still gives White winning chances, but 38.♖xf5 ♖xf5 39.♗xf5 ♔f6 is probably already a drawn position.

So after all these calculations I totally forgot that I should just play 31.♘xe5 dxe5 and 32.♖b4, and instead played the stupid 31.♗g2?.



31...♗f6! Here I understood that we had started the game anew.

32.♘h2 ♔g7 33.♗d5 ♖e7

Black has managed to defend everything.

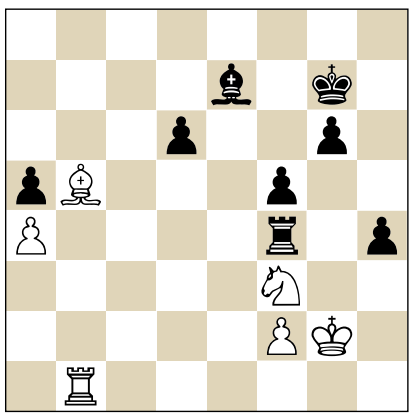
34.♖b4 ♖d2 35.♗c4 a5 36.♖b7

Here we both had very little time to really delve into the position.

36...♖d4 37.♖xe7+ ♗xe7 38.♗b5 h5 39.♘f3 ♖f4 40.♔g2

Having made my 40th move, I left the board. I was very angry with myself that I had missed such a great opportunity to get a big advantage.

40...h4



From a strategical point of view, White's position should be better.

Maybe my recent win against [illegible] the Grenke Chess Classic.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?

Magnus Carlsen. I don't see how to beat him ☺.

Is there a chess book that had a profound [illegible]

In New In Chess 2013/2 Arkadij Naiditsch answered the Just Checking questionnaire. In hindsight the reason why he named Magnus Carlsen as his favourite chess player of all time is most remarkable. Or was he displaying a great sense of humour?

Let's say, in case of a rook exchange it is clear that White can attack the a5-pawn and the other black pawns, but if the black pawns start moving, the position should just be a draw.

41.♖d1!

I am not sure if this was the best move, but I liked it a lot. My threat is simple: to play ♖d4 or ♘d4 next.

41...♖g4+

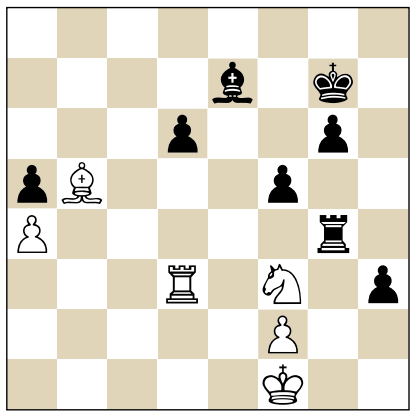
This is probably also the best.

42.♔f1 After 42.♔h3 ♖f4 I probably wouldn't have anything better than to go back to g2: 43.♔g2 (as 43.♖d3? is met by 43...g5) 43...♖g4+, and we are back in the same position.

42...h3

I wasn't sure if this move was really needed. It is great to have a passed pawn on h3, but it could become a target, and if Black loses it, the position should be winning for White.

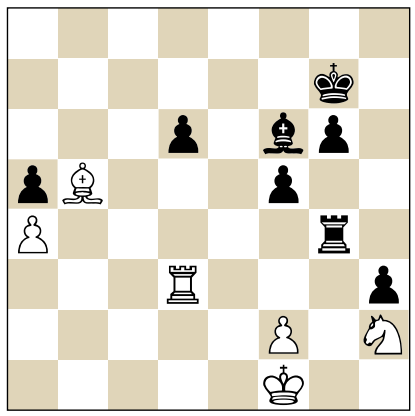
43.♖d3 With the simple idea of playing ♘h2 next.



43...♗f6! A very strong move, using the fact that I cannot take on d6. Black's idea should basically always be to play ...g5-g4 and connect the pawn structure. Which I should, of course, prevent.

44.♘h2

Continuing my strategy of playing against the h3-pawn. After 44.♖xd6 ♖f4 45.♖d3 g5 followed by ...g4, I think the position should be a draw.



44...♖h4 45.♔g1! The beginning of a nice plan. First I need to move my king to free my knight from h2.

45...♗d4 46.♖f3

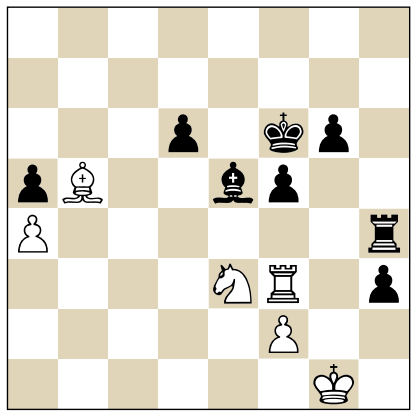
Protecting the f2-pawn and at the same time playing against Black's idea of ...g5-g4, because now the f5-pawn would be hanging.

46...♔f6 47.♘f1

Now that the white king can easily stop the black h-pawn, it is time to bring the knight back into the game.

47...♗e5 48.♘e3

White already has the serious threat of ♘c4 at the right moment.

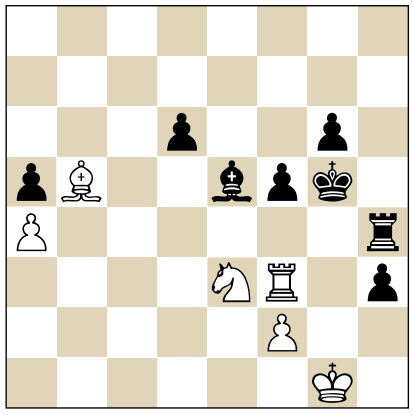


48...♔g5?!

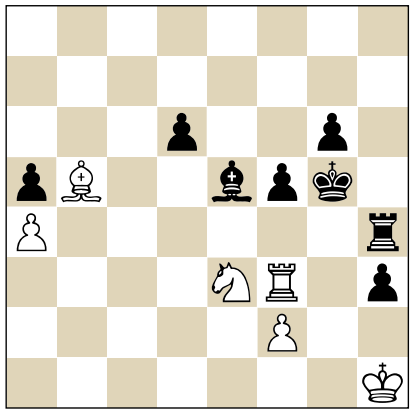
The World Champion starts drifting into the wrong direction...

He should have played 48...h2+!. Of course it is very risky to put the pawn on h2, as it can easily be attacked, but Black is getting active play for it:

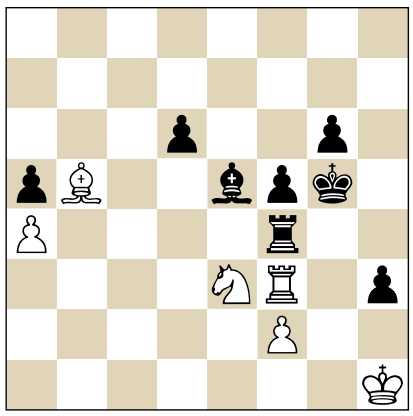
49.♔h1 ♖d4! (the black rook will be great on d2) 50.♔g2 ♔g5 (avoiding all tricks) 51.♖h3 d5, and of course Black still has to put up a serious fight; but objectively the position should be very close to equal.



49.♔h1! This is probably the winning move! Calm but deadly... As is often the case in endgames. The silent ♔h1 creates the deadly threat of ♘c4. 49.♘c4? was premature, since after 49...♖g4+ 50.♔h1 Black would save the game with 50...♔h4!, defending the h3-pawn.

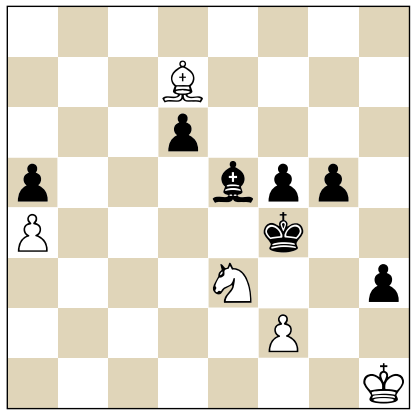


49...♔f6?! It is strange that Carlsen didn't seize his best practical chance, which was 49...♖f4!? and now White has three different options:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

50.♖xf4 ♔xf4 (and again we are in an endgame in which it is very difficult to say if White is winning or not...) 51.♗e8 (of course, there are many other possibilities) 51...g5 52.♗d7



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

(we can clearly see how beneficial it is for White that the bishops are not of the same colour, as Black cannot defend his pawns from a double attack) 52...♔f3 53.♗xf5 ♔xf2 54.♘c4, and once again only an in-depth analysis could clarify whether White really has enough for the full point here.

ERIC VAN REEM

That's what you get when the World Champion comes to town.

Or 50.♖xh3 ♖xf2 51.♘c4 (attacking the e5-bishop and the a5-pawn) 51...♔f4 52.♘xa5 g5, and my feeling tells me that Black should be able to save the game, even though things are still pretty unclear.

Or 50.♖g3+ ♔h4 51.♖xg6 ♖xf2 52.♖h6+ ♔g3 53.♘f1+ ♔g4 54.♘e3+ ♔g3, and this leads to a forced draw.

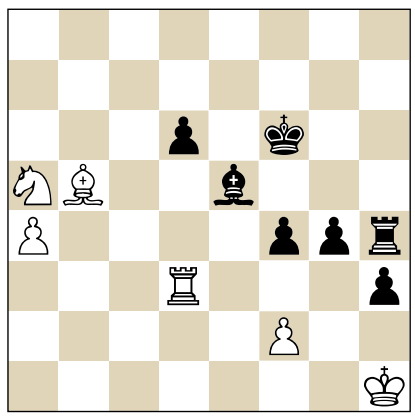
50.♘c4 Now the a5-pawn will fall.

50...g5

Black doesn't have anything better than to try and create counterplay as quickly as possible.

51.♘xa5 g4 52.♖d3 f4

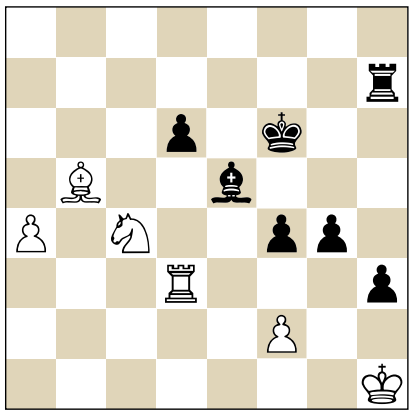
But I am in time for ...



53.♘c4 ... stopping Black from playing ...g3. Here I started to feel that a win over the World Champion was very very close.. .

53...♖h7

Of course, 53...g3 wouldn't work, since after 54.fxg3 fxg3 55.♘xe5 g2+ 56.♔h2 White is easily winning.



54.♘xe5

I have to push my a-pawn and avoid ...g3 at the same time. The text-move is maybe not the best, but from a practical point of view it is a very logical move. Now I don't need to care about the unpleasant ...g3 threat anymore.

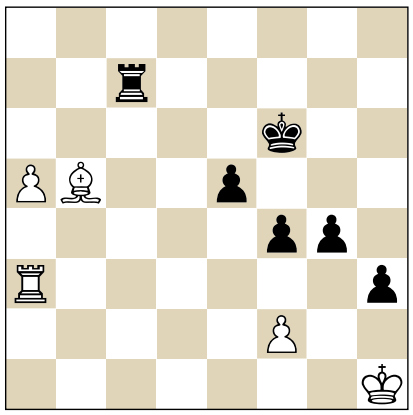
54...dxe5 55.a5

It is time to push the pawn.

55...♖c7

The rook must be activated.

56.♖a3 This is a risky move at first sight, but before playing it, I had calculated the complications right up to the end, hoping I was right.



56...♖c1+

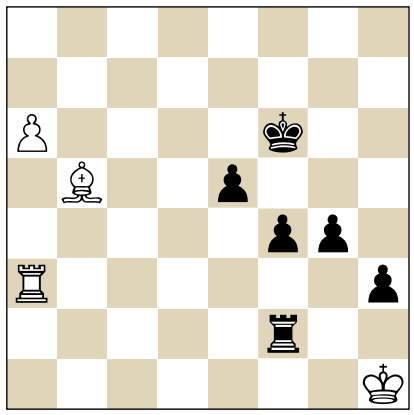
This is Black's only chance. To wait for a6 and play 56...♖a7 is clearly not an option because of ♗c6-b7, and the black rook would be trapped on a7.

57.♔h2 ♖c2

Black will win the f2-pawn.

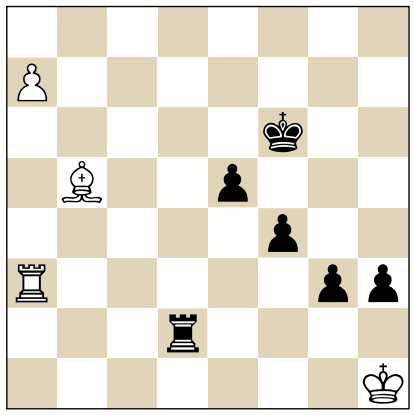
58.a6 ♖xf2+ 59.♔h1

Now Black has a huge armada of pawns advancing, but White is faster.



59...g3 60.a7 From b5 the bishop covers the f1-square.

60...♖d2 60...♖b2 61.♖a1 wouldn't change anything...



61.♖a1

And the game is over. Black can't stop White from playing a8♕, and after a line like 61...♖h2+ 62.♔g1 ♖g2+ 63.♔f1 ♖f2+ 64.♔e1 h2 65.a8♕ the queen covers the h1-square.

I can tell you guys that there is no better feeling than beating the World Champion in a difficult, six-hour game! ☺

■ ■ ■

Carlsen rushed out of the playing hall after he resigned, but contributed a fun fact via Twitter later that night: 'Well, that's my fourth third-round loss in a row'. To refresh your memory: Carlsen lost to Caruana in the third round of the Sinquefield Cup, to Anand in the third game of the World Championship match and to Wojtaszek in the third round of the Tata Steel Masters.

Following the free day, an inspired Magnus Carlsen faced Vishy Anand for the first time since the World Championship match in Sochi last November.

NOTES BY
Peter Heine Nielsen

HD 3.8 – A90
Vishy Anand
Magnus Carlsen
Baden-Baden 2015 (4)

After three rounds both participants in the last two World Championship matches found themselves on 50 per cent, both having good reasons to feel a bit shortchanged. Anand had been very close to winning against Naiditsch in Round 2, while Carlsen, in Round 3 and against the same opponent, had gone for an interesting but risky piece sacrifice, only to overpress and lose. So while it would be obvious to see this game as a continuation of the match in Sochi, the tournament situation made it something quite different. Both players needed a win to correct missed opportunities, and they both seemed willing to lower their guard and go for an open fight.

1.d4!?

In 2008, when Anand defended his newly achieved crown against Kramnik, his choice of 1.d4 was seen as a risky surprise, since it was very much playing on the challenger's turf. These days, one almost has to get a copy of Anand's games collection to remember that he is by nature a 1.e4 player, but that of late the switch has worked maybe better than ever. Both in Sochi, Baden-Baden and Zurich he generated serious pressure in almost every game that he opened with 1.d4.

1...f5!?

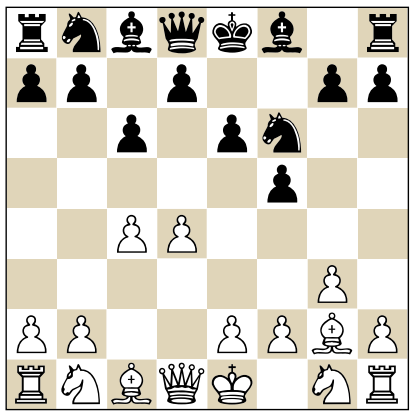
The Norwegian media had put quite some focus on the World Champion's recent experiments in the opening phase. It is true that the Modern against Giri and Naiditsch, as well

as the Dutch against Wojtaszek, had worked out badly, with two losses and just one draw. Even so, Magnus decided not to be bothered by statistics and gave it another try.

2.g3 ♘f6 3.♗g2 e6

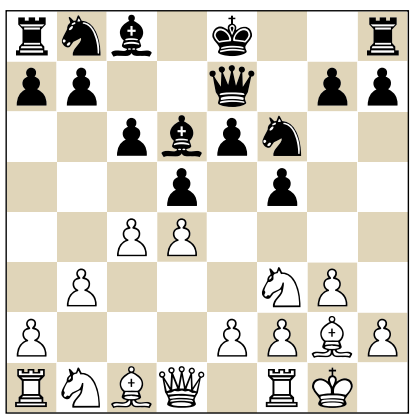
In Wijk aan Zee, against Anand's second Wojtaszek, Carlsen had tried the Leningrad Dutch, but here he aims for a Stonewall instead.

4.c4 c6!? An interesting detail. In Anand's earlier encounters against the Stonewall, which both date back more than 10 years, he always successfully developed his knight to h3, but only after Black had committed himself to a Stonewall with 4...d5.



5.♘f3 The two games mentioned went 5.♘h3 d5 6.0-0 ♗d6 7.♕c2 0-0, and now 8.♗f4 ♗e7 9.♘c3 was Anand-Schmittdiel, 2004, and 8.♘d2 ♗d7 9.♘f3 ♗e8 10.♗f4 was Anand-Nikolic, 2000.

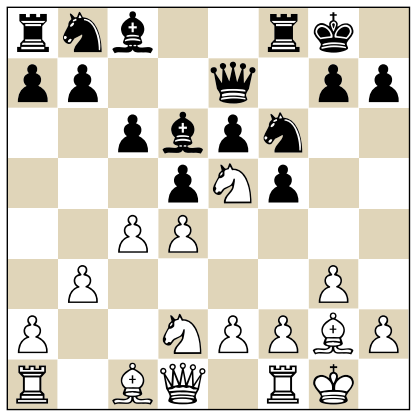
5...d5 6.0-0 ♗d6 7.b3 ♕e7



8.♘e5!?

An interesting move order employed by Van Wely against Carlsen in Wijk aan Zee 2012. The concept is to stop ...b6, but then Magnus played it anyway! However, after 8...b6 9.cxd5 cxd5 the point is that after 10.♘c4! Black has to give up the bishop: 10...♘c6 11.♘xd6+ ♕xd6 12.a4 ♕d7 13.♗a3 ♔f7, as quite often in the Stonewall. Although things are not too bad for Black, he is not exactly equal either.

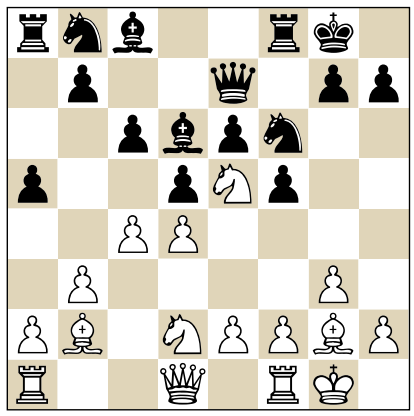
8...0-0 9.♘d2



9...a5

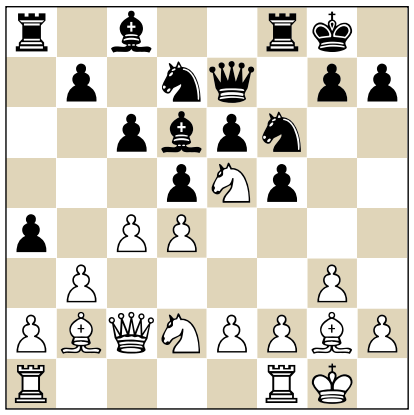
9...b6 was seen twice in the match Van Wely-Moiseenko from the 2012 World Cup. After 10.cxd5 exd5 Black got a promising position, but eventually drew, and in the later play-off he didn't want to see Loek's improvement and went 10...cxd5, only to lose a one-sided game.

10.♗b2



10...♘bd7 The standard move. Simen Agdestein has played 10...♖a7, which at first sight might seem odd, but the point is that 10...b6 is still met by 11.cxd5 cxd5, and now even 12.♘dc4!, when the rook is hanging on a8. However, after 11.♕c2 Black could play 11...b6 and, after 12.♖fc1 ♗b7, have an acceptable position.

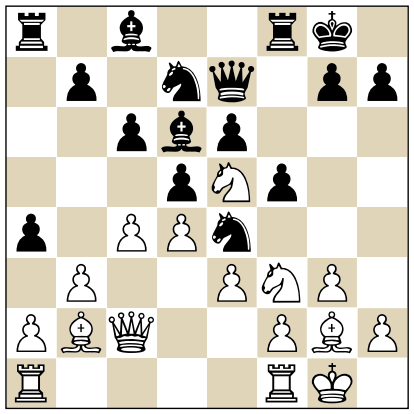
11.♕c2 a4 Black is solid, the only problem being the 'Stonewall' bishop on c8. Putting the pawn on a4 adds some tension, as it is Black who chooses when to either push ...a3 or exchange with ...axb3. In Gunina-Cmilyte, 2011, White decided to keep a1 for the bishop with 12.♖ab1, and although Viktorija later lost the game, she had an equal position.



12.♘df3 The greedy 12.bxa4!? is suggested by the engines. Asked after the game Magnus said that this is definitely not as stupid as it looks. Apart from the extra pawn, which will probably be temporary, it does open the queenside, which is where White has more influence. Black's hope is that White's structure is broken and the c4-square weakened, but exploiting this is not trivial.

12...♘e4 13.e3

Technically speaking this is a novelty, but it is also a sound move. Akopian has played 13.♘d3, which has the drawback that it allows Black to develop his bishop by playing 13...b6.

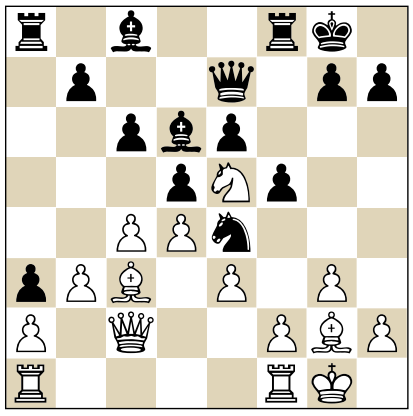


13...a3!?

Or ?!. It is very hard to judge whether Black releases the tension on the queenside way too early and creates a weak pawn on a3, or whether he gets a strong pawn on a3 and a favourable structure on the queenside. The com-

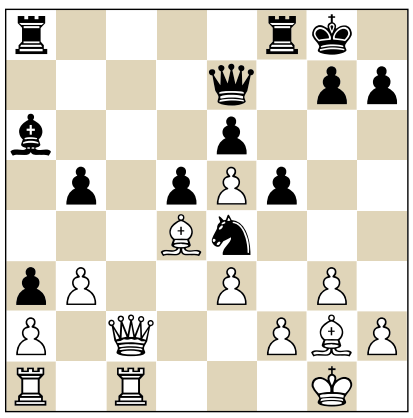
puter, with or without the inclusion of ...a3, likes the move ...g5. Not as a wild attacking move, but challenging the e5-square. Magnus considered the concept, but preferred not to throw forward a pawn on the kingside as yet.

14.♗c3 ♘xe5 15.♘xe5



15...♗d7

Quite logical would be 15...♗xe5?!, first removing the strong white knight and then trying to break the pawn structure: 16.dxe5 b5 (16...♘xc3?! 17.♕xc3 b5 18.cxd5 cxd5 19.♖fc1? is just sad for Black, when a3 – or in case of ...b4, then b4 – can easily become a weakness after ♗f1, ♕d4 and b4) 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.♗d4?! ♗a6 19.♖fc1. At first sight this looks overwhelming for White, as 19...♖fc8 20.♕d3 indeed gives him a huge edge. But:



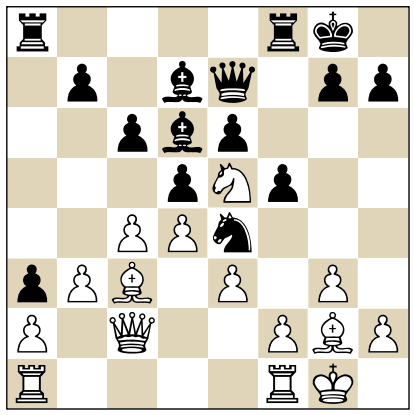
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

19...b4!? 20.♗xe4 (the computer move) 20...fxe4 21.♗c5 ♕f7 22.♗xf8 ♖xf8. White is a full exchange up, but he is in serious trouble. The direct threat is ...♕f3 and ...♗e2, attacking f2, and if 23.♕d2, 23...♕f3 24.♕e1 h5! threatens to push the pawn to h3 and deliver mate. Thus 25.h4, when 25...g5! gives Black a very promising attack.

ERIC VAN REEM

Commentator Nigel Short and Magnus Carlsen happily go down memory lane. 'Flohr-Goldberg, 1949, need I say more, Nigel?'

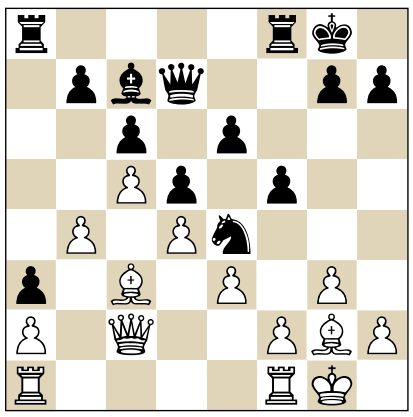
So why did Magnus not play this? He thought d4 was not the square for the bishop, but e1. And after 18.♖fc1! b4 19.♗e1! White is indeed just better.



16.♘xd7!? A very interesting decision. In his post-game interview Magnus, much to the delight of commentator Nigel Short, mentioned that this idea had been used by Salo Flohr against Goldberg in 1949! John Watson has discussed that game in one of his excellent books on modern chess understanding. The point is that the knight on e5 looks good, so taking Black's so-called bad bishop might seem odd. However, the knight on e5 might later be exchanged and thus is only a temporary advantage. But the bishop pair could have bigger long-term potential.

16...♕xd7 17.c5 ♗c7 18.b4

The position has been clarified, yet it still is not obvious how to proceed. One could use Flohr's argument here as well and take on c3, while 18...b5!?, sealing the queenside, also makes a lot of sense, as 19.cxb6 would be met by 19...♗d6!?, followed by 20...♖fb8, with pressure against the pawn on b4. Carlsen's move is just as interesting and logical. If White wants to repel the knight from e4, it will involve playing f3, while counterplay with ...h4 will soften g3, which would make a huge difference.



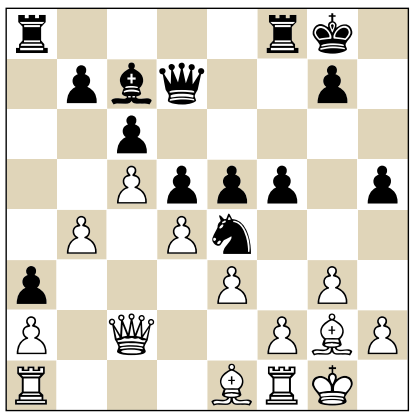
18...h5!? 19.♗e1

19.b5!?, not fearing the black attack, looked interesting, but after 19...h4!? the weakness of g3 will give the black knight a solid foothold on e4. Vishy's

reply looks more logical and human. More in line with Flohr's idea than modern engines!

19...e5

19...h4!? also seems very reasonable for Black: 20.f3 ♘f6 21.gxh4!?. This looks consistent and in line with 19.♗e1 (and even a bit similar to 12.bxa4!?), but Black seems to get excellent structural compensation after 21...f4!, with either 22.exf4 ♘h5! or 22.♗h3 fxe3 23.♗g3 ♘h5!.



20.dxe5

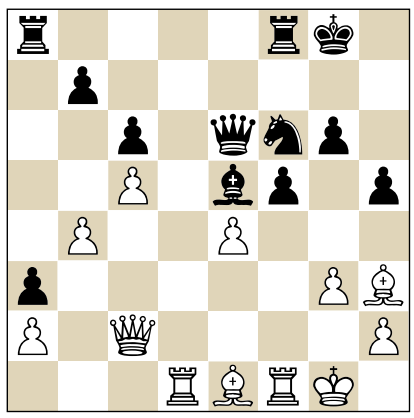
20.f3 ♘f6 21.b5!? is another computer suggestion, which does make quite some sense. White tries to open up the position, when the b-file can be used for counterplay. Black might take on b5 or push ...f4, but in either case White is very much in the game and Black's pawn on h5 might feel more comfortable on h7. Now, however, Black takes over the initiative.

20...♗xe5 21.♖d1 ♕e6 22.f3 ♘f6 23.♗h3 g6 24.e4

Very logical, undermining Black's structure. And if it wasn't for the black pawn on a3, it would have been strategically decisive. But:

24...dxe4 25.fxe4

> 'In his post-game interview Magnus, much to the delight of commentator Nigel Short, mentioned that this idea had been used by Salo Flohr against Goldberg in 1949!'



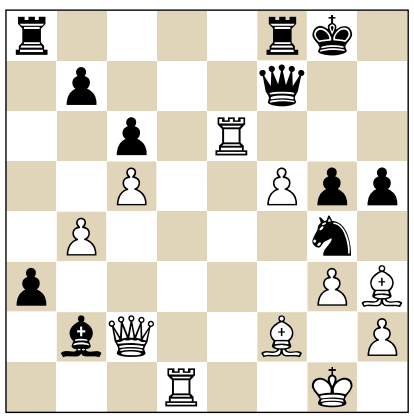
25...♗b2! This makes a major difference. It was possible to defend with 25...♘g4 26.exf5 ♖xf5 27.♖xf5 gxf5, when Black is very much OK, but although Carlsen said he kind of regretted having his pawn on h5, he still thought his position robust enough to survive the White attack, after which his passed a-pawn will become a major trump.

26.exf5 ♕xa2 27.♗f2

27.♖f2 was another way of preventing the threat ...♗d4+, with the undefended queen on c2. Now 27...g5 28.♗f1 is at least fine for White, so Black has to act to secure his kingside: 27...♖ad8! (this seems to be better for Black, but calculating the following line over the board would not exactly be trivial) 28.♖xd8 ♖xd8 29.♗c3 ♘d5!? 30.f6 ♔f7 31.♗e6+ ♔xe6 32.♕xg6 ♕a1+ 33.♔g2 ♘e3+ 34.♔h3 ♗xc3 35.f7+ ♗f6!.

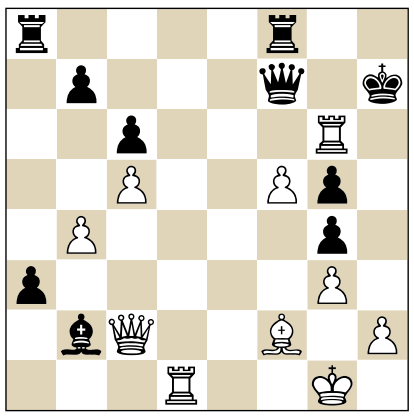
27...g5 28.♖fe1 Black has managed to stabilize the kingside, as 27.♗f2 instead of 27.♖f2 did not threaten ♗f1. But with that threat renewed and the rook aiming for e6, it is not at all obvious at first sight who is better.

28...♕f7 29.♖e6 ♘g4!



Now that the pawn on f5 can no longer be protected, White's position is on the verge of collapse, and he has to go all out for the attack.

30.♗xg4 hxg4 31.♖g6+ ♔h7



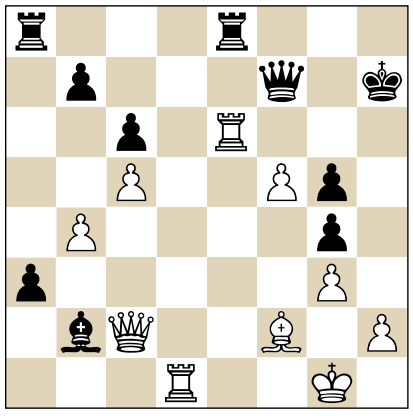
32.♖d7??

A blunder in time-pressure leads to the sudden end of the game. With 32.♖e6! White would have very much stayed in the game, the point being

Baden-Baden 2015 — cat. XX

					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		TPR
1	Magnus Carlsen	IGM	NOR	2865	*	0	½	1	½	½	1	1	4½	2835
2	Arkadij Naiditsch	IGM	GER	2706	1	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	4½	2858
3	Fabiano Caruana	IGM	ITA	2811	½	½	*	½	½	1	½	½	4	2791
4	Michael Adams	IGM	ENG	2738	0	½	½	*	½	½	1	1	4	2801
5	Etienne Bacrot	IGM	FRA	2711	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	3½	2755
6	Levon Aronian	IGM	ARM	2777	½	½	0	½	½	*	1	½	3½	2746
7	Vishy Anand	IGM	IND	2797	0	½	½	0	½	0	*	1	2½	2641
8	David Baramidze	IGM	GER	2594	0	0	½	0	½	½	0	*	1½	2542

that 32...♕xf5 allows 33.♖d7+!, forcing a perpetual. Black's only way to keep playing for a win would have been 32...♖fe8!, as 32...♗f6 33.♖xf6! ♕xf6 34.♖d7+ ♖f7 35.♗d4 ♕xd4+ 36.♖xd4 a2 37.♖d1 a1♕ 38.♖xa1 ♖xa1+ 39.♔g2 just leads to a drawn queen vs two rooks ending.

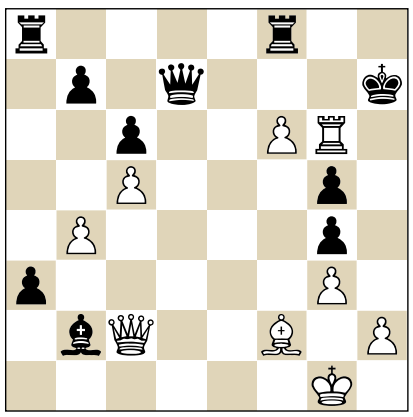


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

33.♖ed6! ♔g8!, when Black manages to defend, as his king hides safely on f8 after 34.♖g6+?!. So White will have to seek a draw after 34.♗d4 ♗xd4+ 35.♖6xd4 a2 36.♖a1, when Black is still pressing, but White's chances for a draw seem better than Black's for a win. Now, however, it's just over.

32...♕xd7! 33.f6

Black's king looks trapped, as ♖g7+ is threatened and 33...♔h8?? 34.♖h6+ mates. But with an elegant temporary queen sacrifice Black immediately decides the issue:

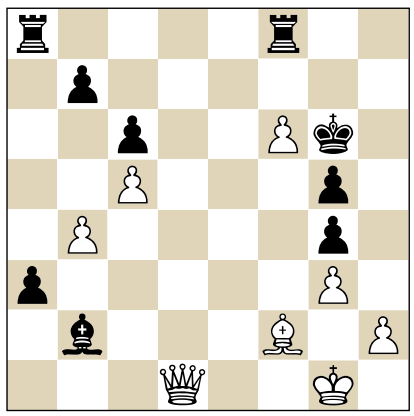


33...♕d1+! 34.♕xd1 ♔xg6

Two rooks for the queen is a fair trade for Black, but the unstoppable a-pawn makes all the difference. White's last hope is a perpetual against the black king.

ERIC VAN REEM

Can I go to sleep now? An exhausted Magnus Carlsen waits for sponsor Wolfgang Grenke to proceed with the priz-giving.



35.♕d3+ ♔h6 36.h4 gxh3

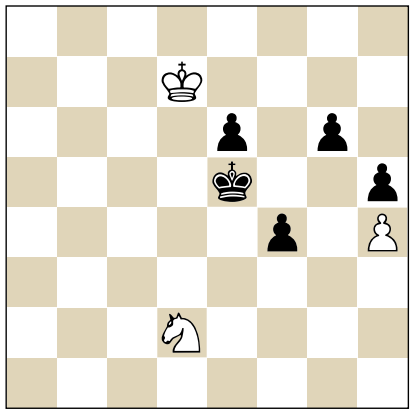
And Vishy resigned.

■ ■ ■

In the same round, Arkadij Naiditsch was lucky to get a full point when David Baramidze decided to be creative.

In the fifth round Baramidze also lost, this time against Carlsen, allowing the World Champion to catch up with Naiditsch. At the start of the final round, Carlsen and Naiditsch shared the lead with 4/6, followed by Caruana with 3½/6, and various play-off scenarios for first place were possible. A rapid play-off for first was planned for players with the same number of points after the final round. Two 10 min + 2 sec games were planned, then if needed two 5+2 games and an Armageddon decider.

Carlsen faced Etienne Bacrot, who was still unbeaten, in the final round and came very close to winning, but having missed his chance he had to settle for a draw. As Naiditsch failed to win a difficult rook ending against Aronian, the two front-runners had to wait a long time for the result of the game Baramidze-Caruana to see if the Italian would join them in a three-way play-off. History repeated itself for Caruana, who missed a win in the 2013 Grenke Chess Classic in a tricky endgame against Daniel Fridman. Again the Italian failed to find the winning move in another marathon game, much to the relief of the organizers:



Baramidze-Caruana
Baden-Baden 2015 (7)
position after 71.♘d2

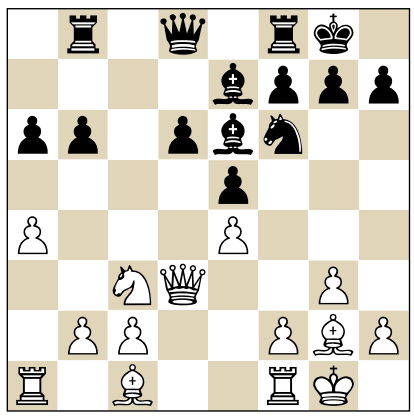
The winning move is 72...♔d4!, giving up the e-pawn. It is hard to see that the white knight can be trapped on h2. Caruana played **71...♔f6?** and after **72.♔c6 g5 73.♘e4+ ♔f5 74.♘xg5 ♔g4 75.♔d6 ♔xh4 76.♘e4 ♔g4 77.♔xe6 h4 78.♔e5 f3 79.♔d4 h3 80.♔e3 h2 81.♘f2+ ♔g3 82.♘h1+ ♔g2 83.♘f2 h1♕ 84.♘xh1 ♔xh1 85.♔xf3** the game ended in a draw.

Play-off

Not many would wager a penny on Naiditsch in the play-off against the Rapid and Blitz World Champion and, indeed, in the first 10+2 game that started shortly past 10 p.m., Carlsen won with ease. Playing White in the second game, the opening went completely wrong for Naiditsch, but in a wild middlegame Carlsen collapsed. After a long day Carlsen felt exhausted and drank a glass of coke in the short break between the games instead of his preferred orange juice and water mix. A bad idea, because 'I couldn't calculate properly anymore, because of the sugar overdose,' as Carlsen put it. In the remarkably well-played blitz games there was no winner, and so the Grenke Chess Classic was to be decided by one final Armageddon game! The regulations stated that a 6+2 vs. 5+2 game would be the decider, but Carlsen protested and said that increments make no sense in an Armageddon game. His opponent agreed, and just before midnight, after almost nine hours of chess that day, the final game of the tournament started, with White having an extra minute and Black draw odds.

SI 14.2 – B91
Magnus Carlsen
Arkadij Naiditsch
Baden-Baden 2015 (5)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.g3 e5 7.♘de2 ♗e7 8.♗g2 0-0 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.a4 b6 11.♘d5 ♘xd5 12.♕xd5 ♖b8 13.♘c3 ♘f6 14.♕d3 ♗e6

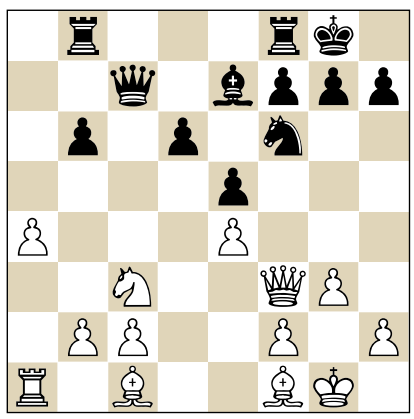


Does he just blunder a pawn, or is Black setting a cunning trap? That wasn't clear anymore at this hour of the day.

15.♕xa6 ♕c7!?

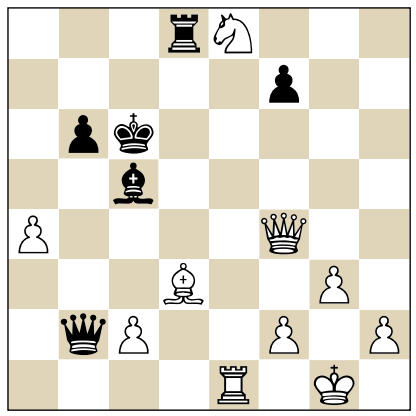
The point. The threat is ...♗c4, winning an exchange, while white knight jumps to d5 or b5 will leave the pawn on c2 en prise. The correct evaluation was given by Nigel Short with just the right dose of red wine and positional understanding. White wins by sacrificing the exchange, was his verdict in the commentary room.

16.♕e2! ♗c4 17.♕f3 ♗xf1 18.♗xf1



This leaves Black an exchange up, but strategically he is busted. The obvious idea of ♗g5xf6 and ♘d5 is certainly relevant, but even the slow b3, ♗b2 and ♗d3 would be almost hopeless for Black, as his pawn structure has major holes on d5 and b5, and there are no ways to repair them. Quite logically, Naiditsch decided that this was the time to act, but his position was beyond repair.

18...d5 19.exd5 e4 20.♕f5 ♖bd8 21.♗f4 ♕c5 22.♖d1 ♕b4 23.♗e5 ♗c5 24.♗xf6 gxf6 25.♘xe4 ♕xb2 26.♗d3 ♖fe8 27.♘xf6+ ♔f8 28.♘xh7+ ♔e7 29.♖e1+ ♔d6 30.♕f4+ ♔xd5 31.♘f6+ ♔c6 32.♘xe8



And a very long day came to an end just a few minutes before midnight. Naiditsch resigned.

Finally, around midnight, the Grenke Chess Classic had a winner! Naiditsch was obviously disappointed, but was happy with his performance in the end.

What's more, many of the spectators regarded Arkadij Naiditsch as the moral winner, because he had beaten the World Champion in the tournament game.

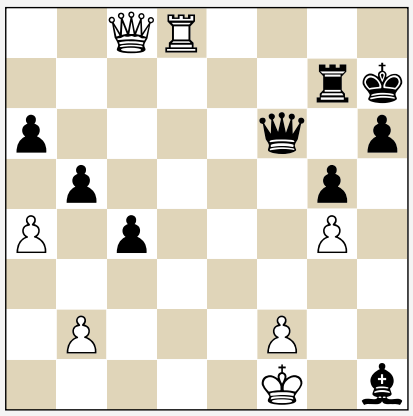
Magnus Carlsen was exhausted, but stated that he had had a lot of fun during the play-off games. And he hadn't been the only one: the 50 or so loyal chess fans that had bravely stayed in the playing hall of the Baden-Baden Chess Centre to follow the excitement live rewarded the players with a standing ovation. ■

MAXIMize your Tactics

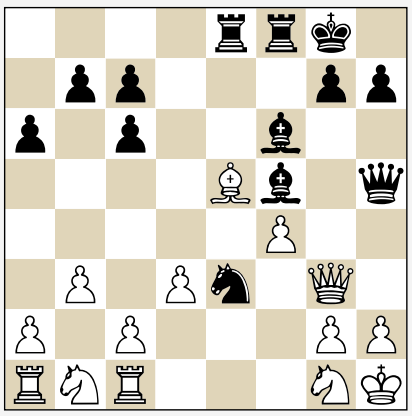
with Maxim Notkin

Find the best move in the positions below

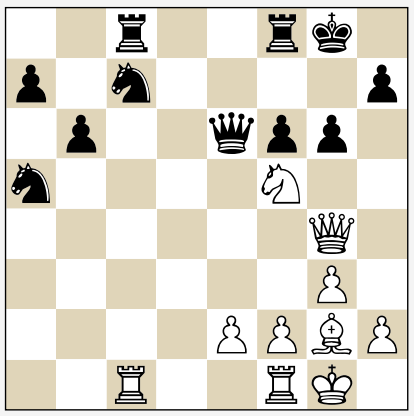
Solutions on page 105



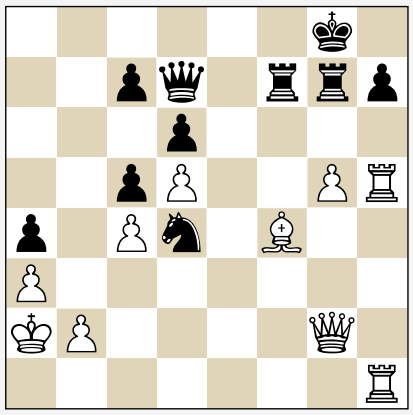
1. White to play



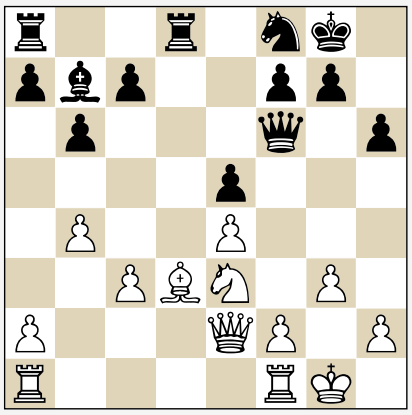
2. Black to play



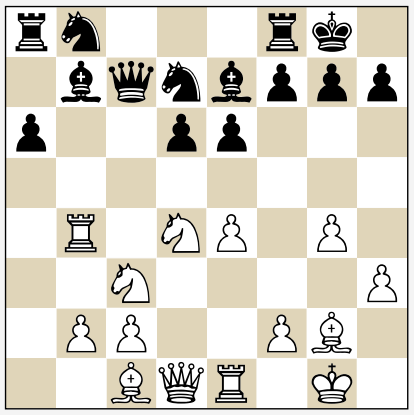
3. White to play



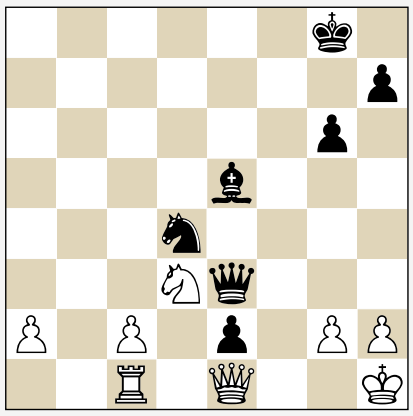
4. White to play



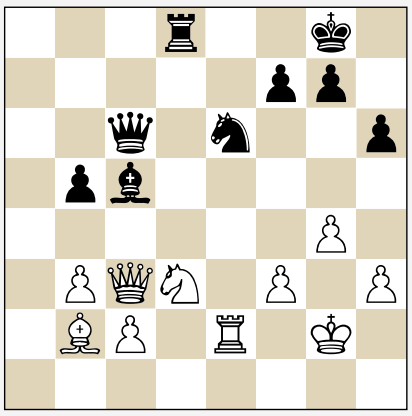
5. Black to play



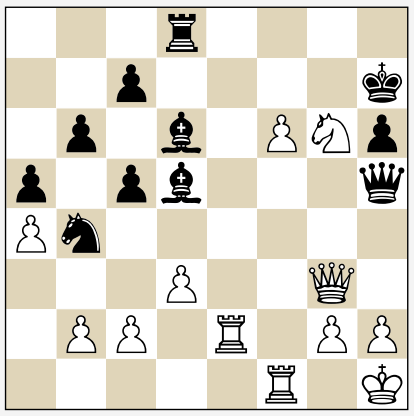
6. White to play



7. Black to play



8. Black to play



9. White to play

Hans Ree

Packing my library

As **Hans Ree** and his wife are moving to a smaller place, they have to shed most of their books. Including a good part of our columnist's chess library. Not an easy job. 'A personal library is a reinforcer of private memories.'

I have packed my chess library, but soon I will unpack part of it.

In the early 1970s, I used to receive the Latvian monthly *Shakhmaty Riga*, the Russian weekly *'64'* and now and then even the daily newspaper *Sovietsky Sport*, although the latter not on a daily basis but as a bulk packet. It was an exchange with the Russian grandmaster Alexey Suetin. I sent him Western chess literature that he couldn't easily obtain in the Soviet Union.

When I moved to another place, I probably sent a note to Suetin to inform him of my change of address, but for quite some time the Soviet magazines kept coming to my former flat – if you can use that word for a single room without kitchen, bathroom or toilet. After a while I stopped collecting them, but for many years I had an unpleasant recurring dream in which I cycled back to my former place to collect hundreds of Soviet magazines in their brown wrapping papers that had been piling up in the entrance hall of the house during my absence.

In real life I never considered myself a collector, because I always bought books and magazines to read them, not for the pleasure of possessing them. But in these dreams I was a hoarder, worried that some issues might be lost.

Later I discarded the *Sovietsky Sport* newspapers and the *'64'* magazines, but for some time (until it somehow disappeared) I kept the issue with the story about my breaking a leg at the 1978 Olympiad in Buenos Aires, a story that was presented as a proof that, contrary to general opinion, the Dutch did have a sense of humour. I also kept the Latvian magazines, until recently.

> 'Recently, Jeremy Silman wrote that his 4000 chess books were pushing him out of his home.'

A few years ago a friend asked me how many chess books I owned. 'Around 3000', I guessed. He was stunned. 'Three thousand books about a game, how is that possible?' That friend is an avid reader, but when he has finished a book he usually gives it away, because he wants to keep his place tidy.

A few months later I visited the chess bookshop Le Due Torri in Bologna, where the owner asked me the same question and I gave the same answer. He also was surprised, but in a different way, because he said: 'But you are a respected chess writer. How can you manage with only 3000 books?' I explained that the Max Euwe Centre, which has a much bigger library, was only a five-minute walk from my place, which seemed to reassure him.

In the theatre play *Amédée, or How to get rid of it* by the Romanian-French absurdist writer Eugène Ionesco, a man and his wife are afflicted by a continually growing corpse in one of the two rooms of their flat. The ever-growing corpse is causing mushrooms to sprout all over the flat. They have to get rid of it.

At the end of the play the man, Amédée, tries to dump the enormous corpse in a river, but he becomes entangled in it and together they float away, leaving the wife alone. We recognize the fate of the book collector, tied to his possessions.

Recently, Jeremy Silman wrote that his 4000 chess books were pushing him out of his home. It reminded me of a newspaper article about a middle-aged man who had kept all the newspapers that he had ever received. They were filling up his place, with only narrow corridors left free to enable him to reach his bed, a small table and a chair. Obviously he had no partner living with him; at some point in life one has to make a choice.

In an interview with Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam for New In Chess 2008/5, the Dutch chess book collector Jurgen Stigter referred to the publisher and book collector Tony Gillam, and to the way Tony's friend Ken Whyld had consoled him after Tony's divorce: 'Now at least you've got more room for your books.' This remark may seem harsh, but to a real collector it comes naturally.

Obviously, the collector's life is not all roses, but as I wrote, I never was a collector and the 3000 chess books I own – or should I say owned? – used to fit easily in my home. I am not in the same situation as Jeremy Silman, but our fates are related. He is in danger of being pushed out of his home by his books; I will move to a much smaller place, so my wife and I are forced to shed most of the books that have been stacked here for 40 years.

My wife is less sentimental than me in what she (keeping her chin up) calls 'shedding excess', so she is getting rid of more of her personal possessions than me. But I also have to make a contribution, and part of that is taking leave of about half my chess books.

It is not an easy job. First there is the painful selection, and then the question of what to do with the ones that cannot join me in my transmigration. I wanted to sell them and get as much money for them as possible.

General literature fetches nothing nowadays, which pains me, not so much because I would like to get a good price – although that's true too – but out of a general respect for books. The Dutch poet and writer Gerrit Komrij, who died in 2012, once wrote a poem that started triumphantly 'I saw the book of my enemy in the publisher's remains store', but now I find his own fine works in the one-euro crate outside an antiquarian's shop or even in a box on the street, put there by a friendly reader shedding his excess and to be taken away for free. To be sold at a publisher's remains store is almost a badge of honour for a book these days. Chess books are still doing a bit better.

A personal library is a reinforcer of private memories, connected with the purchase and the first reading. The same applies to the great collectors, of course, but those people also have an important public function. They are guardians of the chess world's collective memory. Great public collections like those at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague or at the Cleveland Public Library grew from private collections. Private collections may be inaccessible for a period of time, but one day everything will find its way to a wider public.

'The German philosopher Walter Benjamin regarded the purchase of a book as rescuing it from its lonely abandonment on the market place and giving it its freedom.'

In his essay *Unpacking my Library*, the German philosopher Walter Benjamin described the love of a collector for his books in a curious way. He regards the purchase of a book as rescuing it from its lonely abandonment on the market place and giving it its freedom – 'the way the prince bought a beautiful slave girl in *The Arabian Nights.* To a book collector, you see, the true freedom of all books is somewhere on his shelves.'

Recently I had dinner at the house of Jurgen Stigter, who has given freedom on his shelves to more than 25,000 books. Some of them are extremely valuable – a Carrera, a Salvio, a Damiano, which may be touched with gloves by privileged visitors – others are there just by cause of what I would call the child's delight of hoarding. The foundations of his house have been strengthened, but Jurgen still worries sometimes. At some point Tony Gillam, who was also present at the dinner, exclaimed: 'All we have is history!' He, too, is a guardian of our collective memory.

Collectors were extremely helpful in finding new freedom for the books I had to shed. This may sound rather cynical, but in fact they bought only a few items for themselves – always offering more than I would have asked – as my collection contained very little that they didn't already have themselves. But thanks to them, the rest will be in safe hands to be auctioned or sold, which is a great relief.

As I write this, I am still in my old flat. The books that I cannot take with me have already been disposed of. The others have been packed in boxes, and in a few weeks I will unpack them at my new place. As with Walter Benjamin, when he was unpacking the 2000 rare books that he hadn't been able to see since his divorce two years earlier, memories will come to me of foreign cities and their bookshops.

I think of Benjamin's remark that inheritance is the soundest way of acquiring a collection, because it bestows a sense of responsibility on the owner. And indeed, one of my most cherished books is the *Lehrbuch des Schachspiels* by Mieses and Dufresne, the only chess book in my possession that was owned by my father.■

HANS REE

Nakamura picks up speed in Zurich

For the fourth time the Ball Room of the Savoy Baur en Ville served as the exquisite playing room for the Zurich Chess Challenge.

The fourth Zurich Chess Challenge was a tight race between Vishy Anand and Hikaru Nakamura. In the serene surroundings of the stately Savoy, the former World Champion took the lead in the classical part, only to see the American catch up with him in the rapid games on the final day. In an improvised Armageddon tiebreaker, Nakamura showed no hesitation and polished off his rival in a mere 29 moves with the black pieces. ZCC sponsor Oleg Skvortsov believes that professional chess is in need of a complete reform. He has come to the conclusion that the game needs to become faster, and he is planning to set an example next year.

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

JACEK PULAWSKI

Hikaru Nakamura receives the winner's trophy of the 4th Zurich Chess Challenge from sponsor Oleg Skvortsov, General Director of the Russian branche of IGC International Gemological Laboratories.

Shortly before the start of the round he walks into the Ball Room of the Savoy Baur en Ville Hotel, as if in a hurry. The chandeliers sparkle, the lush carpets muffle any obtrusive sounds. The spectators are silent in anticipation and six world-class grandmasters are ready to start their games. Oleg Skvortsov briefly approaches the players, shakes hands, exchanges a few words, cracks a joke, and then takes his seat in the front row. Here he will sit for most of the afternoon, together with his wife Nataliya, who has come to appreciate his love for chess. Occasionally he will leave the room, to make phone calls or discuss the positions with the journalists and grandmasters in the press room. And then he'll be back again, drinking in every minute of the tournament he has created himself.

Oleg Skvortsov is serious about chess in any shape or form. He is a dedicated player himself, who diligently works on his opening ideas. In Moscow he has a training session of about four hours with respected coaches every week. He tries his ideas out in friendly games against the best players. He claims that in the past few years he has played close to 200 games against top grandmasters, in which they agree on the opening that will be played. Many of these games were played during the Zurich Chess Challenge. The vast majority of them he lost, which is not surprising with an Elo gap of 400 points or more, but Skvortsov cherishes the moments when his openings lead to wild complications and he manages to confuse his opponents.

Three years ago, the Zurich Chess Challenge originated as a match between Vladimir Kramnik and Levon Aronian, and it has now developed into a six-player double round-robin. In the first half, lasting five days, classical games are played that bring in double points. On the final day, the 'return matches' are rapid games.

Skvortsov's ambition is to have the biggest stars, and last year Magnus Carlsen took part. The participation

of the World Champion was a great crowd-puller, but it also created some friction when the Norwegian found the Savoy too stuffy and moved to another hotel. For this year's edition, the Norwegian was invited again, but when Skvortsov felt that Carlsen and his management had left him waiting for too many months, he cut the knot, invited a replacement and publicly condemned Carlsen's behaviour. In reply, Carlsen's manager denied that there had ever been a firm commitment from their side. We may never know what really happened, but Skvortsov's point of view was supported by the tournament director and President of the Zurich Chess Club, Christian Issler. When asked, he told us that despite an earlier promise, Carlsen had kept postponing the signing of the contract for several months. Apparently, Issler no longer minded his absence too much in the end, as he smilingly welcomed us to a 'relaxed tournament, without Carlsen'.

As might have been expected, there was no mention of Carlsen on the tournament website, but there was an indirect reference to him. In the press release that announced the field, Fabiano Caruana was described as 'the superior winner of the recently concluded Super Tournament in St. Louis' and 'currently the most attractive chess player'. This was a bit unfortunate, as the Italian arrived in Zurich struggling with his form.

> 'We want them to play with their full power. You cannot be a travelling circus.'

Caruana finished in last place, which didn't please the sponsor, who felt the top seed had behaved irresponsibly. Skvortsov was disappointed by two players ('I don't need to mention their names; it is clear who they are') who came to Zurich straight from Baden-Baden and who had also played in Wijk aan Zee. 'We were not happy about this. And I say "we", because this also applies to the Zurich Chess Club, who organize the tournament. We don't want exclusivity, but we want them to play with their full power. You cannot be a travelling circus. There should at least be one week between two tournaments.'

Caruana showed some remorse: 'My play has been shaky for a while, but I was terribly tired here. Maybe it was a bit much. Particularly Wijk aan Zee is very tough. That's like three tournaments in one. But then Baden-Baden didn't seem like a tournament I wanted to turn down. In hindsight it was maybe not the best idea to play all three.'

Nevertheless, the world's number two is not too worried about the ground he lost in the past months. 'I don't see it as the end of the world. I mind, I don't like it, but I don't see it as a huge tragedy. Your confidence gets a bit dented, but I have lost before.'

Levon Aronian also played three tournaments in a row. His poor showings evoked further speculation that the Armenian is losing his place among the elite and that he may very well be over the hill. Aronian shrugged off the theories that have been vented, particularly on the Internet. 'Only amateurs write such things, or people who don't know anything about sport. Today he's a hero, tomorrow he's a loser. I always want to hear the criticism of my friends and my colleagues, people I respect. And when I had a very high rating, I heard the criticism from my friends as well.'

At the same time he doesn't deny that something is wrong. 'Obviously I am not playing my best chess. I have good moments in games and then something suddenly goes wrong. I will try working on my concentration more. I have always had this same problem, throughout my career. I know what is bothering me and I am going to solve it. In fact, I am kind of excited to undergo this; I have a task in front of me. It is a challenge.'

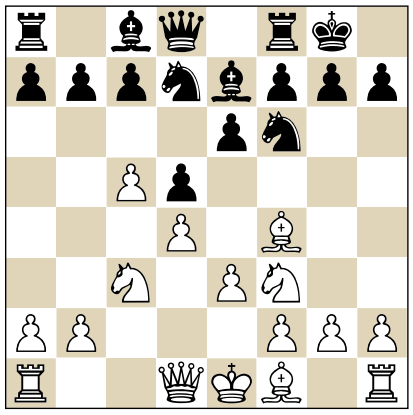
NEW IN CHESS

For Fabiano Caruana and Levon Aronian the Zurich Chess Challenge was the third tournament in a row after Wijk aan Zee and Baden-Baden.

The classical part of the Zurich Chess Challenge was clearly dominated by Anand and Nakamura. None of the other players even managed to win a single game. Anand and Nakamura both won two games. The key game was their direct encounter, which was won by Anand and gave him a one-point lead over the American (as their 'classical' points were doubled for the combined standings) before the rapid games on the final day.

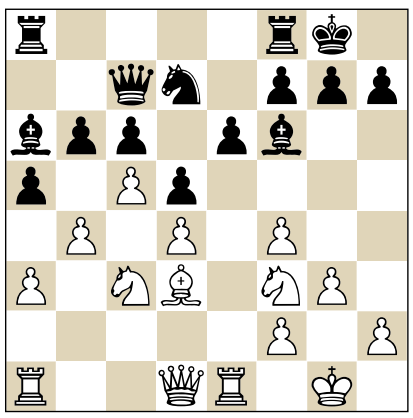
D37 – QO 1.5
Viswanathan Anand
Hikaru Nakamura
Zurich 2015 (4)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗e7 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♗f4 0-0 6.e3 ♘bd7 7.c5



7...♘h5 In the third match game in Sochi, Carlsen played 7...c6 against Anand. The Indian scored a fine win when the World Champion went badly astray later (1-0, 34). For an analysis of that game and a lucid explanation of the opening subtleties by Anish Giri, see New In Chess 2014/8.

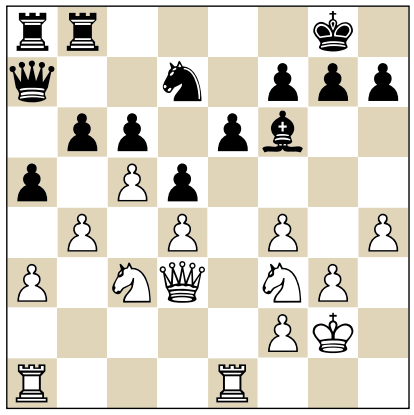
8.♗d3 ♘xf4 9.exf4 b6 10.b4 a5 11.a3 c6 12.0-0 ♕c7 13.g3 ♗a6 14.♖e1 ♗f6



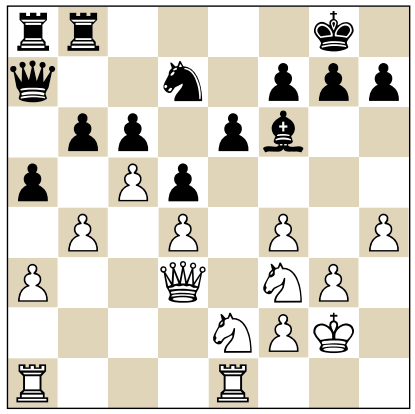
NEW IN CHESS

Swiss GM and commentator Yannick Pelletier welcomes Vishy Anand and Hikaru Nakamura at the press conference. The American still cannot believe that he played 18...g6?.

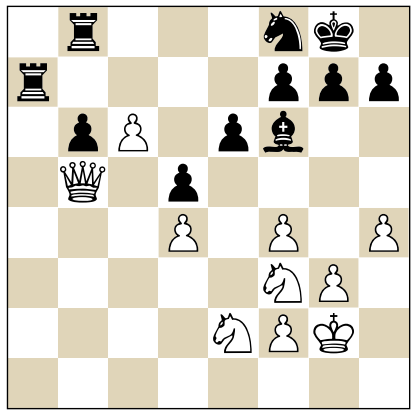
15.♔g2
A new move. Hitherto 15.♘e5 had mainly been played here.
15...♗xd3 16.♕xd3 ♖fb8 17.h4 ♕a7



18.♘e2 (?)
After the game Anand said that the reason he played this was that this move worked in a similar position he had looked at, but that here he 'might have misplayed it'.
Instead he suggested 18.♖ab1, but Nakamura felt that he should not be worse at all after 18...axb4 19.axb4 ♕a3 20.♕c2 bxc5 21.bxc5 ♖xb1 22.♘xb1 ♕b4, to which Anand agreed.



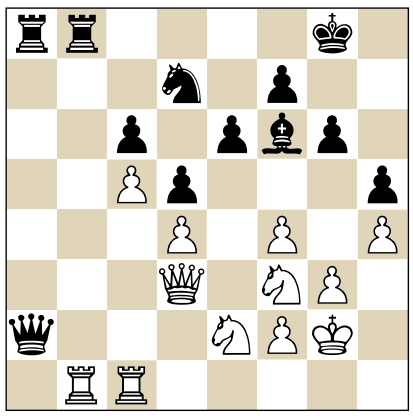
18...g6? A blunder, according to Nakamura, from which he didn't recover. He felt that he was better and that he should have gone 18...axb4 19.axb4 ♕xa1 20.♖xa1 ♖xa1 21.b5 cxb5 22.♕xb5 ♖a7 23.c6 ♘f8,



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

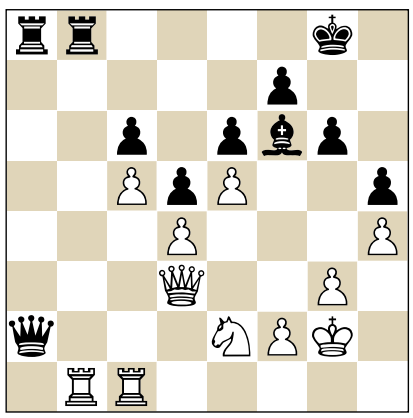
and now for instance 24.♘c1 ♖c7 25.♘d3 ♖bc8, when Black can meet 26.♘b4 with 26...♗e7.

19.♖ab1 axb4 20.axb4 ♕a2 21.♖ec1 bxc5 22.bxc5 h5



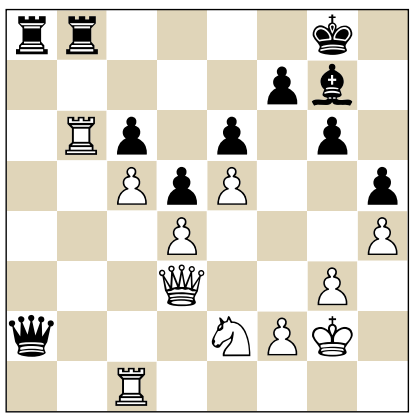
Another move Nakamura was unhappy about, as it created a weakness that kept bothering him.

23.♘e5 ♘xe5 24.fxe5



24...♗g7? But this is more serious. He should have gone 24...♗d8, not only keeping an eye on b6, but also on h4 in case White tries to break open the kingside with g4.

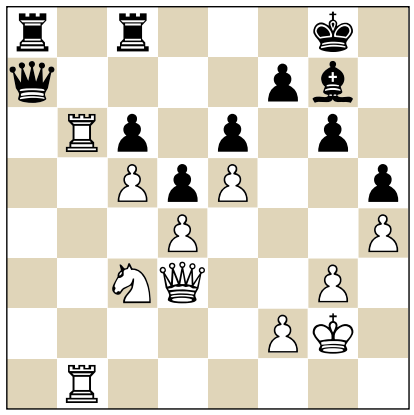
25.♖b6!



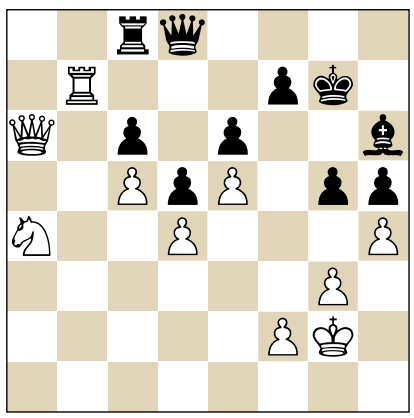
25...♖c8

Now he's losing. Nakamura thought he could take on b6, until he saw 25...♖xb6 26.cxb6 ♕a5 27.♖b1 ♖b8 28.♕b3, and White wins thanks to the mighty passed pawn on b6.

26.♘c3 ♕a7 27.♖cb1 White starts an invasion on the queenside and there is little Black can do.



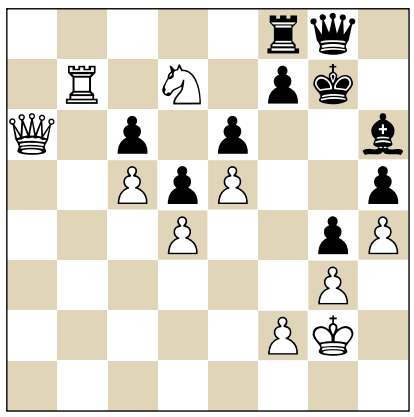
27...♕d7 28.♖1b4 ♗h6 29.♘a4 ♕d8 30.♖a6 ♔g7 31.♖b7 ♖xa6 32.♕xa6 g5



A bid for counterplay, but it comes too late.

33.♕e2 A cool reply. Now Black cannot allow the queen to take on h5, and after his forced answer the attempt at counterplay is smothered.

33...g4 34.♕a6 ♕g8 35.♘b6 ♖f8 36.♘d7



36...♕h7

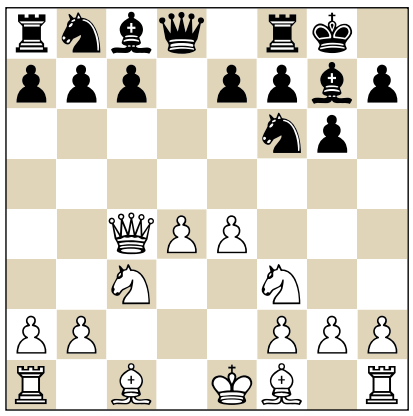
Anand had expected him to go 36...♖a8, when he showed the following nice win: 37.♖a7 (and not 37.♕xc6? ♖a2 38.♘f6 ♗e3!, and suddenly it's a draw, e.g. 39.♔f1 ♕a8!) 37...♖xa7 38.♕xa7 ♕h7 (if the queen goes to the queenside, White also plays 39.♘f6, and the pawn on h5 drops, since the king cannot protect it because of ♕a2-c2+) 39.♘f6 (covering e4, so there's no check) 39...♕d3 40.♕b8, and White wins.

37.♘xf8 ♕e4+ 38.♔h2 ♔xf8 39.♖b8+ ♔g7 40.♕c8 ♔g6 41.♕h8 Black resigned.

The classical part also showed once again how detailed and deep opening preparation can be these days – and what a price you pay if you fail to remember what you have looked at. In Round 2, Anand profited from excellent opening preparation and from the fact that Levon Aronian, who knew of the improvement, got lost in his attempts to reconstruct what the computer's conclusions had been.

GI 10.3 – D97
Viswanathan Anand
Levon Aronian
Zurich 2015 (3)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.♕b3 dxc4 6.♕xc4 0-0 7.e4



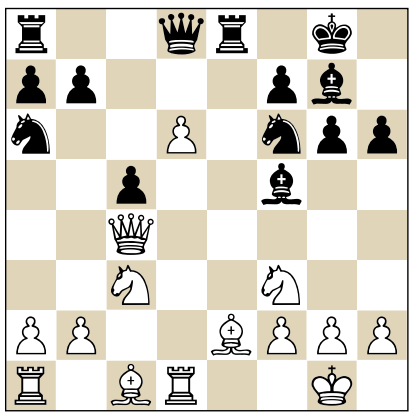
7...♘a6

Almost all moves have been played in this position, but of late this has been one of the most popular choices.

8.♗e2 c5 9.d5 e6 10.0-0 exd5 11.exd5 ♖e8 12.♖d1

In the 10th game against Carlsen in the World Championship match in Sochi, Anand played 12.♗g5 (½-½, 32).

12...♗f5 13.d6 h6

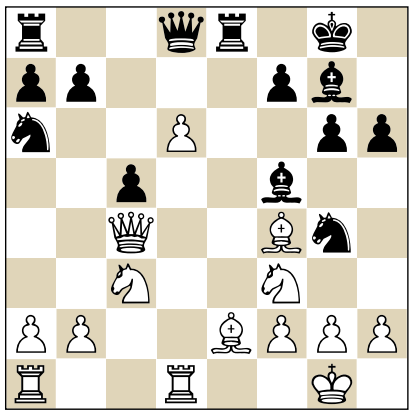


14.♗e3

Many games have been played with 14.♗f4. For instance, Karpov did so in the 1987 World Championship match against Kasparov (in that match he also tried 14.h3; both games were drawn) and Piket successfully employed it against the same Kasparov in Amsterdam in 1995.

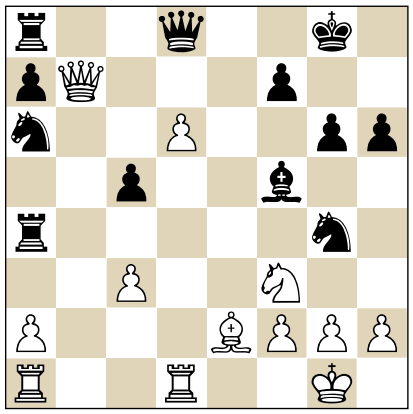
14...♘g4 15.♗f4

This allows Black to win a piece, but it's only a temporary loss.



15...♗xc3 16.bxc3 ♖e4 17.♕b5 ♖xf4 18.♕xb7 ♖a4

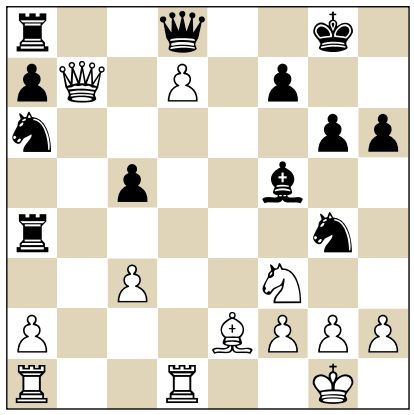
The best option for Black.



NEW IN CHESS

The stately Savoy Baur en Ville Hotel on the night of the closing ceremony of the Zurich Chess Challenge.

19.d7



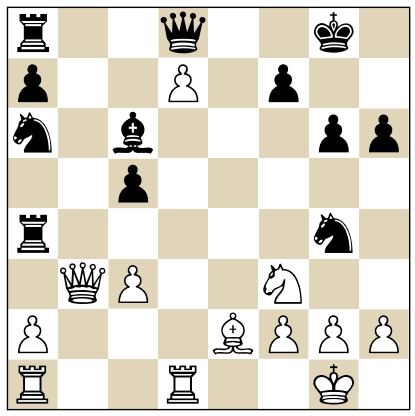
A strong move that was still part of Anand's opening preparation. For the moment, White is a piece down, but he has great compensation thanks to Black's lack of coordination and the annoying passer on d7.

After the game Anand said that he had already looked at this position many years ago with an early version of Fritz that gave 19.♗xa6 ♖b8 20.♕c6 ♗d7, and the bishop on a6 drops off. Some months ago the Anand team had taken a fresh look with modern engines and found the text-move.

19...♗e4

Anand indicated that Black is perfectly fine after 19...♘c7 20.h3 ♘xf2 21.♔xf2 ♗xd7 22.♗b5, when 'three only moves' lead to equality: 22...♘xb5 23.♖xd7 ♕b8 24.♕d5 ♕f8.

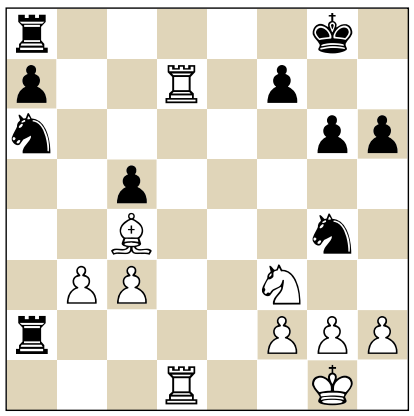
20.♕b3 ♗c6?



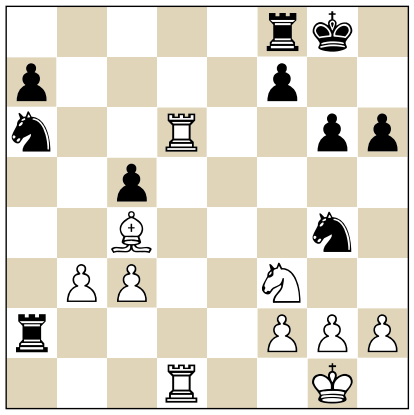
This loses. Interestingly, Aronian had also investigated 19.d7, but at the board he could not recall the variations and got lost in his calculations. The only way to go was 20...♖a5, when White keeps the initiative with 21.♘d2.

21.♖d6! A cruncher. The rook not only attacks the bishop on c6, but also threatens 22.♖xg6+.

21...♗xd7
To both 21...♖b8 and 21...c4 White replies 22.♕d1, leaving Black with too many problems to solve.
22.♖ad1 ♕b8 23.♖xd7 ♕xb3 24.axb3 ♖a2 25.♗c4
Miraculously, the material is equal, but it's clear that with all his weaknesses Black will soon suffer serious losses.



25...♖f8 26.♖7d6
Strong and straightforward. With the threats against a6 and g6, Black loses a piece.

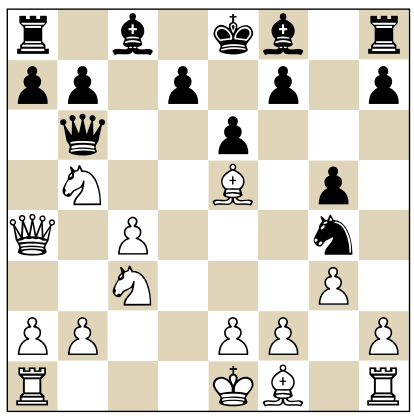


26...♔g7 27.♖xa6 ♖xf2 28.♖e1
Black resigned.

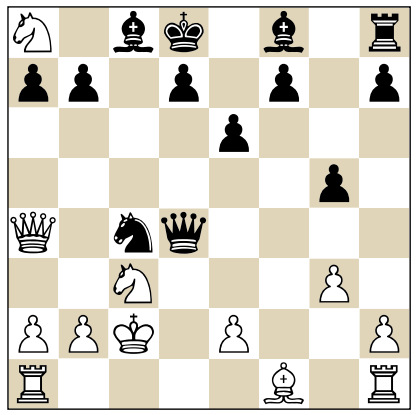
The next day Nakamura successfully lured Sergey Karjakin into a mind-boggling variation. The American knew that the ultimate verdict of the computer was the increasingly popular 0.00, and so did the Russian. But not at the board. After the game a dejected Karjakin tweeted: 'The worst way to lose a game is when you know the line until a draw, but cannot remember how it goes and get a losing position immediately.'

EO 32.3 – A33
Hikaru Nakamura
Sergey Karjakin
Zurich 2015 (3)

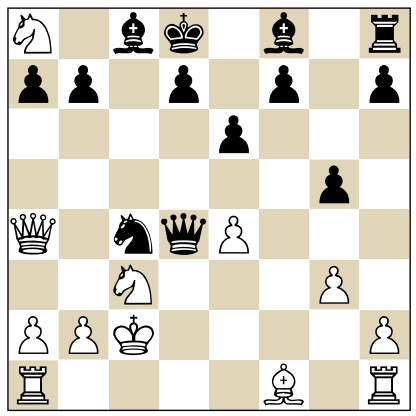
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 e6 6.g3 ♕b6 7.♘db5 ♘e5 8.♗f4 ♘fg4 9.♕a4 g5 10.♗xe5
If you see this for the first time, you may wonder what is going on, but it has all been seen before. And White voluntarily allows Black to take on f2 with check, although normally speaking it won't yield him anything.



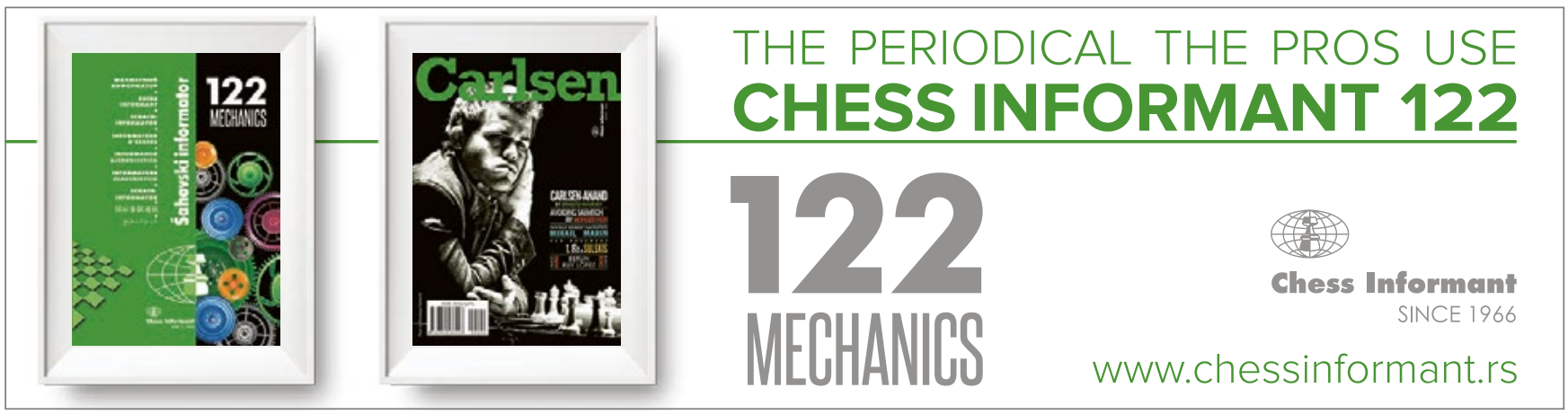
10...♕xf2+ 11.♔d1 ♘xe5 12.♘c7+ ♔d8 13.♘xa8 ♕d4+ 14.♔c2 ♘xc4

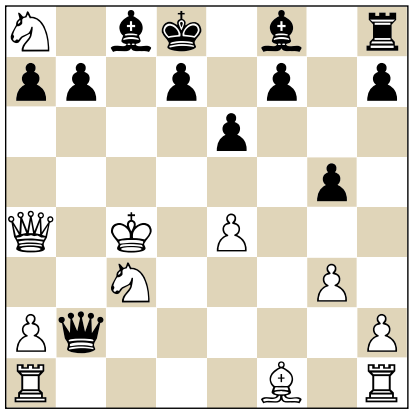


15.e4
White's only try if he wants to achieve anything. 15.♔b3 ♘d2+ 16.♔c2 ♘c4 led to a draw in Carlsen-Dominguez in Linares in 2009.



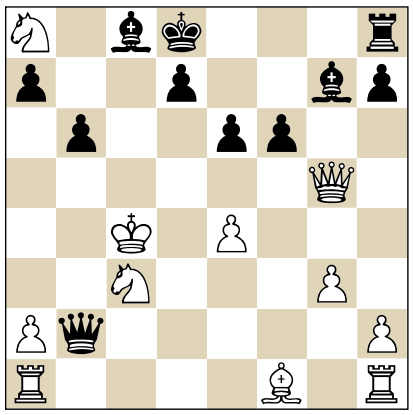
15...♘e3+?
A serious mistake caused by doubts that crept into Karjakin's mind as he tried to remember his opening preparation.
The way to play, which should lead to a draw, was 15...♕d2+, when after 16.♔b3 ♕xb2+ 17.♔xc4 Black's only move is





ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

17...♗g7! (Nakamura explained that he had chosen to play this variation because he hoped that at this point his opponent might choose the 'human' move 17...d5+, when 18.♔d3 ♗g7 19.♘e2 ♕xa1 20.♗g2 ♕e5 21.♕xa7 dxe4+ 22.♔e3 is better for White) 18.♕a5+! (another only move – at the board Karjakin got worried about 18.♕b3, but this is a mistake, as after 18...♕xa1 19.♗g2 ♕xc3+ 20.♕xc3 there is, as Karjakin himself indicated later, 20...b5+, and Black will win the knight and most probably the game) 18...b6 19.♕xg5+ f6

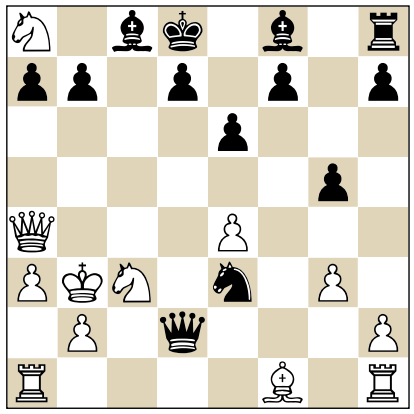


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

20.♕b5 (only this one, as after 20.♕xg7 ♗a6+ 21.♔d4, 21...♕f2 is mate) 20...♗a6! 21.♕xa6 f5!, and after two more only moves Black has reached a position in which the white king cannot run away from perpetual check.

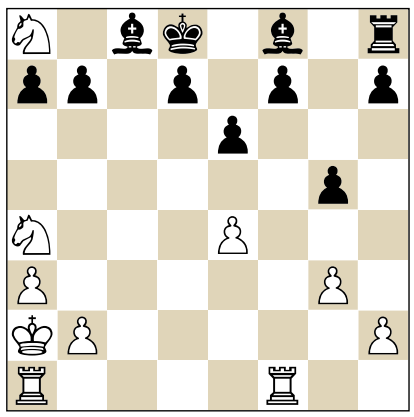
16.♔b3 ♕d2 17.a3

Here Karjakin started thinking for a long time, not because he had missed this move, which is the only way for White to prevent mate, but rather because he realized he had mixed up his opening preparation.



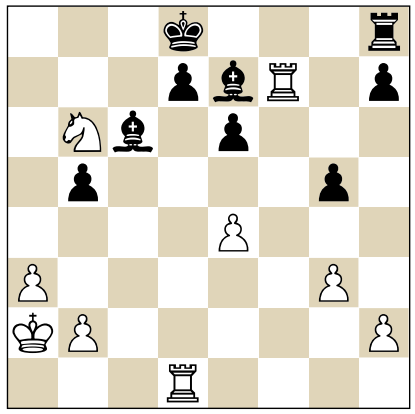
17...♕c2+ 18.♔a2 Karjakin now chooses the best continuation under the circumstances, but it nevertheless leaves him with a precarious position.

18...♕xa4 19.♘xa4 ♘xf1 20.♖hxf1



20...b5 There's no time for 20...b6 21.♖ac1 ♗b7 22.♘c7 and the knight will escape.

21.♘4b6 axb6 22.♘xb6 ♗b7 23.♖xf7 ♗c6 24.♖d1 ♗e7



25.♖f3

As he said at the press conference, Nakamura was very happy to find this move, which essentially ends the game.

Originally he had planned 25.♘c8, but then he saw 25...♗c5 26.b4 ♔xc8 27.bxc5 and it's not so easy to win this, if it's winning at all.

continued on page 86

NEW IN CHESS

Sergey Karjakin: 'The worst way to lose a game is when you know the line until a draw, but cannot remember how it goes and get a losing position immediately.'

Viktor Kortchnoi dominated the exhibition match against Wolfgang Uhlmann, but had to settle for a 2-2 tie when, having reached a winning position in the fourth rapid game, he dropped a piece.

The Eyes of Viktor Kortchnoi

Arturo Pérez-Reverte

The Savoy Hotel in Zurich. The chess tournament sponsored by the Russian millionaire, Oleg Skvortsov, is taking place over several days and some of the world's most important players are participating. Each day, hour after hour, everything happens in an appropriate silence, interrupted only by the click of the clocks after each move or the gentle thud of pieces on chessboard squares. A brief round of applause, at the very most, rings out at the end of a game. Among those here are Anand, Aronian, Kramnik, Karjakin … Some of the strongest grandmasters. The perfect elite, or just about. For those who, despite being mediocre players, like myself, replaced God with chess long ago – because it seems more logical and offers greater consolation than a prayer, an altar or a confessional – watching these players in action, hunched over the chessboard, is like attending a Mass in a tranquil church: it calms the spirit enormously.

Moreover, things are different this morning. It's an exceptional, almost historic occasion: Viktor Kortchnoi, at 84 years of age, is playing a friendly game against the German, Uhlmann (80). Yesterday, I had the chance to observe old Kortchnoi at close quarters. I was next to him in the audience, and I took a good look at him as he watched the players. There he sat, in a wheelchair since suffering his second stroke, very deaf, in a virtually vegetative state, attended to almost constantly by his wife, Petra: the veteran fighter – with his long nose, large ears, sparse hair and lively eyes keenly examining the players – he never missed a single detail of what was happening on the electronic screens which showed the positions of the pieces. Motionless, his hands resting on his knees as if he himself

were playing, bent forward just as if he were sitting at the chessboard, this legendary player focused with an almost inhuman degree of concentration on the three games being played simultaneously. 'He's still playing in his head.' Leontxo García whispered, next to me. 'It's the only thing he can still do.'

But he could do more, as we found out this very morning, just a moment ago, when they wheeled him in front of a chessboard to face Wolfgang Uhlmann. The ancient Kortchnoi appeared to be oblivious to everything, absent, gazing at us bewilderedly while people took photos, and when he said a few words, he did so ill-humouredly, in Russian, to his wife – in a very loud voice, as is usually the case with people who are very hard of hearing. He wanted to change places with his opponent. Some of us smiled, recognizing the combative Viktor Kortchnoi, ready for a fight, the formidable personality who had challenged Karpov in Baguio City, in the Philippines, in 1978. The living legend who inspired the characters of the two players in *Dangerous Moves*, which is, perhaps – together with *Searching for Bobby Fischer* – one of the greatest films about chess every made, in the same way that Stefan Zweig's *Schachnovelle* (Chess Story) is the finest novel about chess of all time.

Then Kortchnoi began to play and the miracle occurred. The ancient, absent invalid fixed his eyes on the chessboard and, without once looking at his opponent, except through the pieces, those eyes of his – eyes which had seen corpses strewn on the streets of Leningrad, the eyes of the dissident whose wife was deported to Siberia and whose son was sent to prison, the eyes of the man who was persecuted by the KGB to the point that they considered murdering him, the eyes of the valiant hero who had fought so ferociously, with his mind and sheer courage as his only weapons, against the champions backed by the all-powerful Soviet Union – those same eyes played out two memorable games. Without once looking away from the pieces, Kortchnoi pauses for quite a while, every now and then, tapping his fingers deep in thought, or he leans right over the board to examine something which we, packed into the hall, are unable to see. On two occasions, he even covers one eye with a hand, as if that eye were bothering or betraying him. Then, loyal to his old, murderous style, he gobbles up every piece Uhlmann places within range in the final few moves. And this man, at 84, who is partially paralysed after two strokes, emerges with a defeat as Black and a victory as White. From time to time, he turns a little to look at the clock and it is clear that, although his faculties have been reduced to the minimum, the thousands of games and the millions of moves registered in his memory continue to be played out independently, almost automatically. And as we realized this, Leontxo and I looked at each other in astonishment, thinking the same thing: the very last corner of his brain to fade would be chess. ■

(Translated by Adam Feinstein)

That internationally acclaimed author Arturo Perez-Réverte is passionate about chess can be gleaned from his novel The Flanders Panel (1990), in which a chess position on a 15th-century painting plays a pivotal role. Pérez-Reverte, whose books have been translated into 19 languages, was in Zurich for the first three days of the Chess Challenge and dedicated his weekly column (published in 28 newspapers in Spain and Latin America) to Viktor Kortchnoi, one of his chess heroes.

Guest of honour Arturo Pérez-Reverte together with Nataliya and Oleg Skvortsov, both ardent readers of his novels.

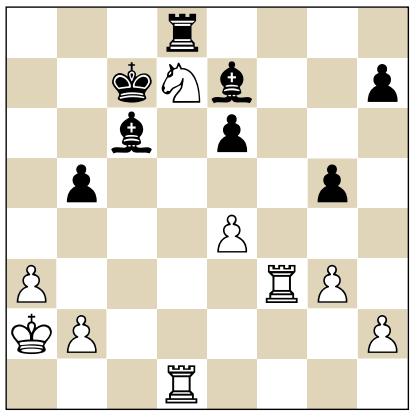
NEW IN CHESS

continued from page 83

25...♔c7

After 25...♖f8 there is the nice trick 26.♖c3 ♔e8 27.♘xd7! ♗xd7 28.♖c7, and it's over.

26.♘xd7 ♖d8



27.♖c3

And in view of 27...♖xd7 28.♖dc1 ♖d6 29.e5 Black resigned.

■ ■ ■

There were a couple more games in the classical part that deserved attention, but the general feeling was that, given the names of the players, the first five days could have been more explosive. Whether the excitement of a game depends on the speed at which it is played remains a moot point, but all in all Oleg Skvortsov feels that chess has to be sped up if it wants to reach a broader audience than the several tens of thousands of regular viewers. Indeed, it's quite a challenge not to lose your spectators if a player thinks about a move for half an hour. Skvortsov has no doubts: 'I believe that chess needs a change. A complete reform. It should be quicker. One hour for the first 40 moves and then half an hour for the rest of the game. No increments. So that a game can last three hours maximum. I was always in favour of classical chess, but in the last two, three years I have changed my mind, as I am thinking of the average spectator. Quicker is the word.' He didn't want to reveal details, but indicated that his ideas will be realized in the next Zurich Chess Challenge.

The rapid part was won by Vladimir Kramnik. For the former World Champion Zurich is connected with many happy chess memories and this time, too, he was pleased with the play he showed. With a little bit of luck in the classical section he might even have been the overall winner; but the Russian didn't complain.

Nakamura may have hoped that, following his stellar rapid performance at the London Classic, he would sweep the field in the rapid games in Zurich as well. It didn't happen, but he did score a full point more than Anand and this was enough to draw level in the combined standings. The Indian was obviously disappointed that he had failed to defend a one-point lead in the rapid, but he preferred to look back with a positive attitude and let the harvest of the classical games prevail: 'I simply played well; many intense games. I just enjoyed it.'

The key game was Nakamura's win over Anand.

NOTES BY
Hikaru Nakamura

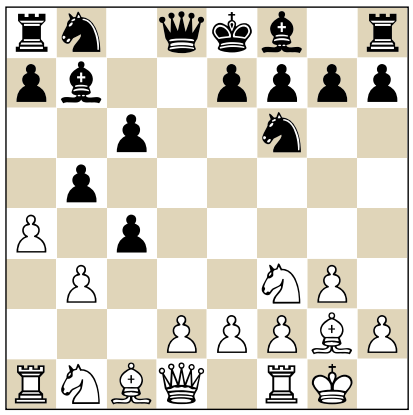
RE 7.6 – A11
Hikaru Nakamura
Vishy Anand
Zurich rapid 2015 (4)

Heading into this critical 4th Round encounter, I was a full point behind Anand. Having blundered away a big advantage against Kramnik, complemented with his brilliant play (35...♗xb2! in particular), I lost. Combined with a pretty lifeless draw against Karjakin, it was pretty clear that this was my last chance to try and catch up.

1.c4

I had got good positions with the English in my previous two rapid games, so why not go with what works!

1...♘f6 2.g3 c6 3.♗g2 d5 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.0-0 b5 6.a4 ♗b7 7.b3



7...b4!?

An interesting idea, which Anand

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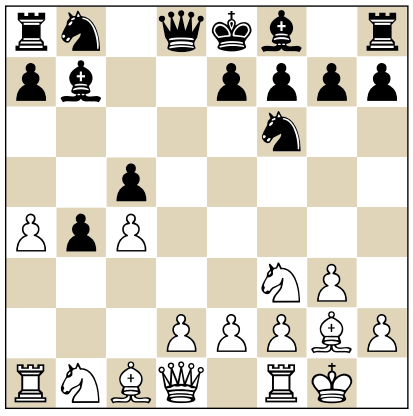
blitzed out, so it was rather obvious that he had looked at it before the game with his second, Polish GM Gajewski.

8.bxc4 c5

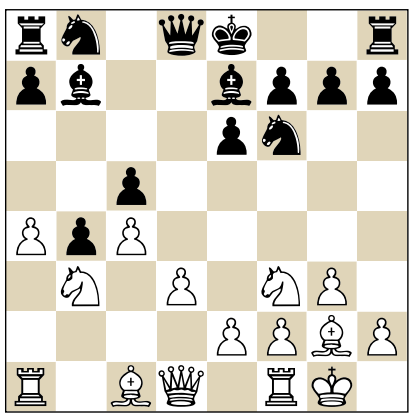


9.d3

This move is, strangely enough, a novelty. However, the previous game didn't do anything to change the evaluation.

After 9.a5 e6 10.d3 a6 11.♘bd2 ♘bd7 12.♗b2 ♗d6 13.♘e4 ♗e7 14.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 15.♗xf6 ♕xf6 16.♕a4 ♖b8 17.♖ad1 ♔e7 18.♘d2 ♗xg2 19.♔xg2 ♕e5 Black had absolutely no problems in Pantsulaia-Vallejo, Plovdiv 2012.

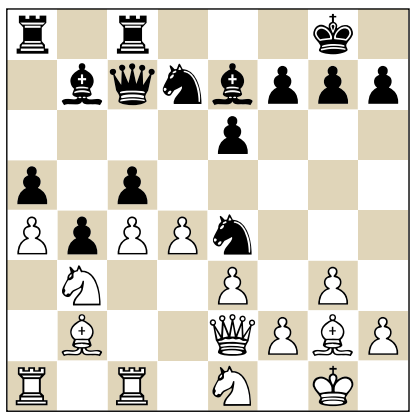
9...e6 10.♘bd2 ♗e7 11.♘b3



11...a5!?

An interesting decision by Anand. As this was a rapid game, I had already decided to avoid using time considering whether to go a4-a5 or prolong the decision. Thus, I was quite happy to see this move, as it made my life easier.

12.♗b2 ♘bd7 13.e3 0-0 14.d4 ♕c7 15.♕e2 ♘e4 16.♖fc1 ♖fc8 17.♘e1



17...♘d6?!

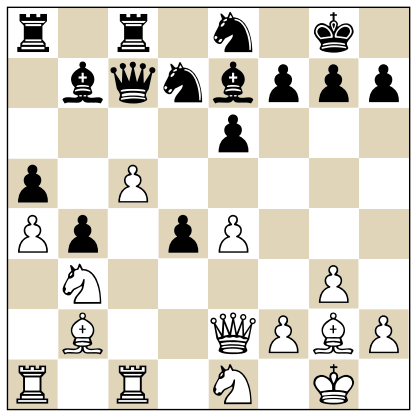
Better was 17...♗f6! 18.♕d3 (after 18.f3 ♘c3 19.♗xc3 bxc3 20.♖xc3 e5 21.dxc5 e4 22.♘d4 ♘xc5 Black has massive compensation for the pawn and is probably even better) 18...♘d6 19.e4 cxd4 20.c5 ♘e8 21.♗xd4 ♗xd4 22.♕xd4 ♖d8, and Black should be more than fine as the exchange of the dark-squared bishops, unlike in the game, is substantially in Black's favour here.

18.e4! Originally, I had miscalculated a long line when I went for this, mistakenly assuming that 18...cxd4 was not possible.

JACEK PULAWSKI

Hikaru Nakamura: 'It's been a while that I've been enjoying playing tournaments so much. I am just happy and enjoying everything.'

18...cxd4 19.c5 ♘e8



20.♗xd4

My original plan was 20.c6, but it doesn't quite work: 20...♗xc6 21.♘xd4 ♕b6 22.♘xc6 ♖xc6 23.♖xc6 ♕xc6 24.e5 ♕a6! (the move I had missed) 25.♕b5 (I did see this move when I was calculating whether to go 20.c6 or 20.♗xd4, but it just felt like it couldn't possibly be enough) 25...♕xb5 26.axb5 ♖d8 27.♖xa5 ♘b6, and the computers still think the position is equal, but I would much prefer Black in a rapid game.

20...♘e5 21.f4 ♘c6 22.♗b2

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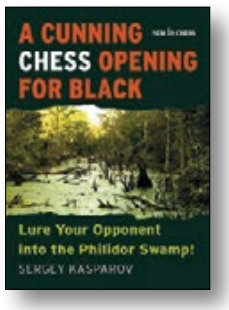

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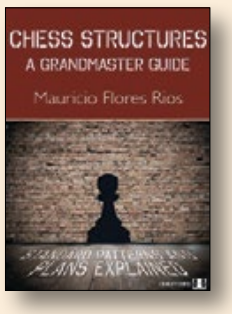

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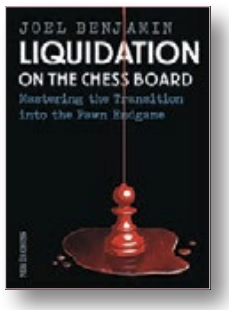

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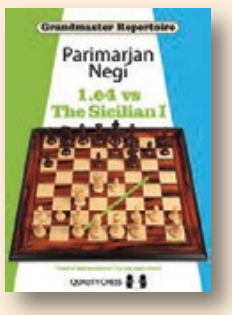

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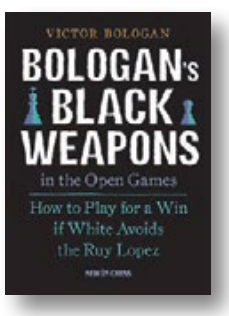

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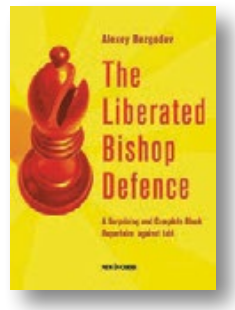

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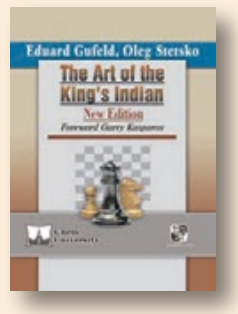

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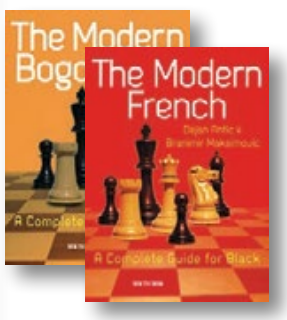

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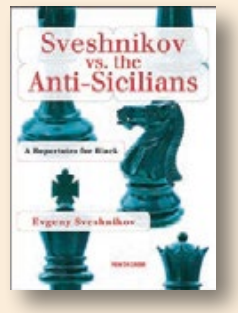

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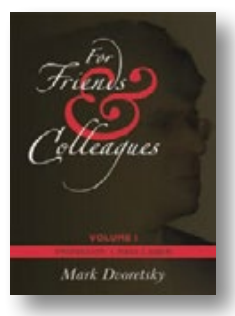

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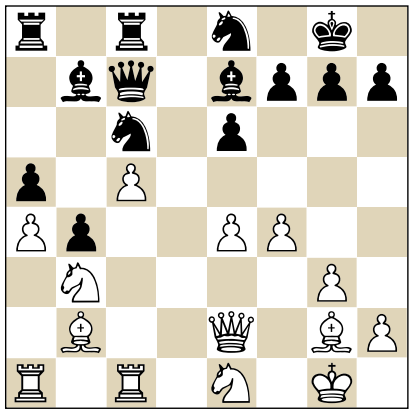
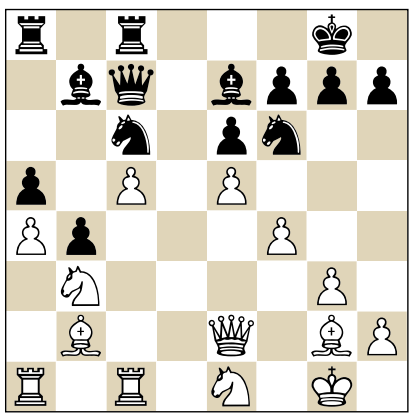


22...♘f6

22...e5 23.♕e3 ♘f6 24.♘d3 ♘d7 leads to a very double-edged position with chances for both sides. Of course, that was exactly what I was hoping for before the game!

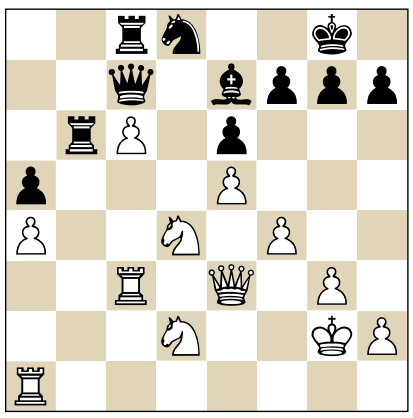
23.e5



23...♘d5

In case of 23...♘d7 24.♖c2 ♘d8 25.♖ac1 ♗xg2 26.♕xg2 ♘c6 27.♕e4 White should be better, as it is hard for Black to create counterplay.

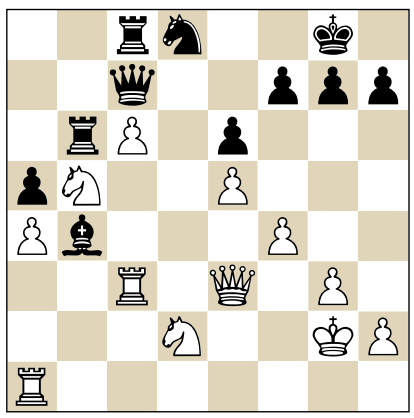
24.♘f3 ♖ab8 25.♘fd2 ♘c3 26.♕e3 ♘d8 27.♗xc3 bxc3 28.♖xc3 ♗xg2 29.♔xg2 ♖b4 30.c6 ♖b6 31.♘d4



31...♗b4?!

This isn't the best move, but without going deep into the tank and using a lot of time (bad idea in rapid), it's borderline impossible to go for the slightly better 31...♘xc6. However, even after the alternative White still retains an advantage. After 32.♘b5 ♕b7 33.♔h3 ♗b4 34.♘d6 ♕b8 35.♘xc8 ♗xc3 36.♕xc3 ♕xc8 37.♖c1 White keeps a strong initiative and an advantage, despite the equal material, due to the clumsiness of Black's pieces, combined with the a5 weakness.

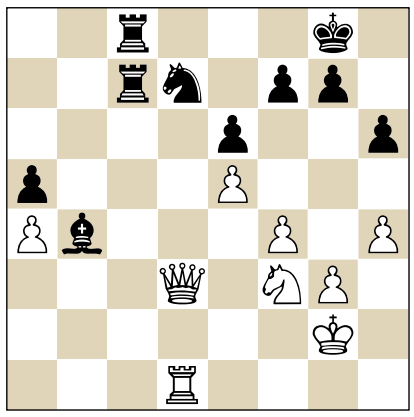
32.♘b5



32...♖xc6

After 32...♕b8 33.c7 ♕a8+ 34.♔h3 ♗xc3 35.cxd8♕+ ♖xd8 36.♕xc3 ♖c6 37.♘c4 White is simply winning, as the knight on b5 will go to d6 and become a rock.

33.♘xc7 ♖xc3 34.♕e4 ♖3xc7 35.♘f3 ♘b7 36.♖d1 ♘c5 37.♕c2 ♘d7 38.♕d3 h6 39.h4 ♘c5 40.♕c2 ♘d7 41.♕d3

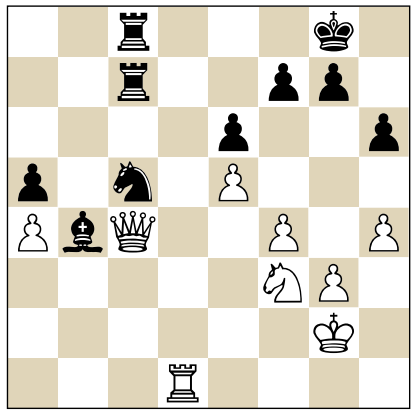


41...♘c5

41...h5 was a way of trying to fix the pawn structure, but there are technical issues here, too: 42.♘g5 ♘f8 (42...g6? 43.♘xe6) 43.♔h3 ♗e7 44.♘e4, and White's knight is heading to d6 and the a5-pawn will likely become weak. However, I think this might have been a better defence for Black in a rapid game.

42.♕c4!

The only try. Bad was 42.♕b5?! ♘e4! 43.♖d7 ♖c2+ 44.♔h3 ♘f2+ 45.♔g2 ♘e4+ 46.♔h3 ♘f2+ 47.♔g2 – a repetition of moves was obviously not what I was looking for.



42...♘d7

I suspect that 42...♘xa4 43.♖d8+ ♖xd8 44.♕xc7 ♖f8 45.h5 should be a draw with correct play, but it would

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3	Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	RUS	2783	½	½	*	½	½	½	2½	2784
4	Sergey Karjakin	IGM	RUS	2760	½	0	½	*	½	½	2	2716
5	Fabiano Caruana	IGM	ITA	2811	½	0	½	½	*	½	2	2706
6	Levon Aronian	IGM	ARM	2777	0	½	½	½	½	*	2	2713

For the combined standings the points scored in the classical games were doubled

Zurich 2015 Rapid cat. XXII

					1	2	3	4	5	6		TPR
1	Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	RUS	2783	*	1	1	0	½	1	3½	2933
2	Levon Aronian	IGM	ARM	2777	0	*	½	1	1	½	3	2857
3	Hikaru Nakamura	IGM	USA	2776	0	½	*	½	1	1	3	2857
4	Sergey Karjakin	IGM	RUS	2760	1	0	½	*	½	0	2	2716
5	Vishy Anand	IGM	IND	2797	½	0	0	½	*	1	2	2709
6	Fabiano Caruana	IGM	ITA	2811	0	½	0	1	0	*	1½	2629

be unpleasant enough in classical chess, let alone rapid.

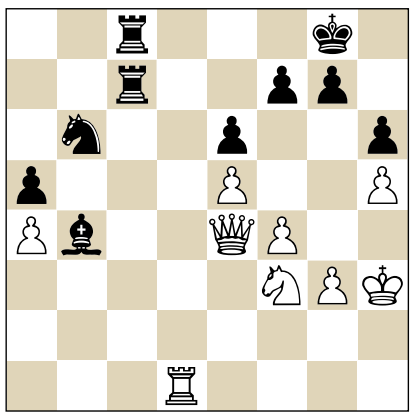
42...h5 was a try to prevent the looming structure, but it doesn't quite work: 43.♘g5 g6 44.♔h3. Black has too many moving parts, and the white knight on g5 is extremely strong.

43.♕b5 ♘f8 44.h5

From here on in, I think this is close to winning.

44...♖c5 45.♕b7 ♖5c7 46.♕e4 ♘d7 47.♔h3 ♘b6

47...♘c5 48.♕c4 ♘xa4 49.♖d8+ ♖xd8 50.♕xc7 ♖f8 51.♘d4 more or less transposes to the line I mentioned above with 42...♘d7.



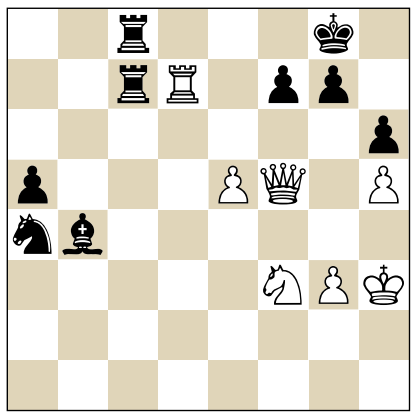
48.f5! The key break!

48...exf5

The alternative was 48...♘xa4 49.fxe6 fxe6 (49...♘c3 loses in all of the following variations: 50.exf7+ ♖xf7 (or 50...♔f8 51.♕f5 ♘xd1 52.♘h4; or 50...♔h8 51.♕f5 ♘xd1 52.♘h4) 51.♕g4 ♖cf8 52.♖d3) 50.♕g4 ♘c5 51.♘d4 ♖e8 52.♕g6 ♖ce7 53.♘c6 ♖f7 54.♖f1 ♖ef8 55.♖c1 ♖c7 56.♘d4 ♖e7 57.♖c4 – surely this must be a technical win.

49.♕xf5 ♘xa4 50.♖d7

This is winning, but during the game I had actually missed that Anand could still defend with ...♘b6 and ...♗c5. However, it is more than enough, thankfully.

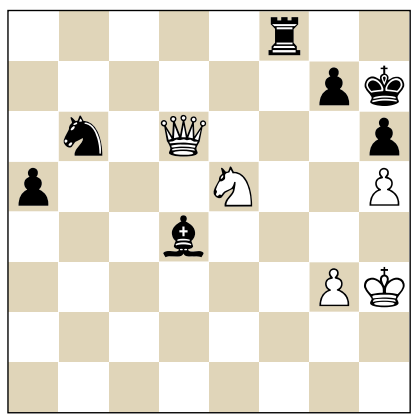


Zurich 2015 Combined cat. XXII

1	Vishy Anand	IND	2797	9
2	Hikaru Nakamura	USA	2776	9
3	Vladimir Kramnik	RUS	2783	8½
4	Levon Aronian	ARM	2777	7
5	Sergey Karjakin	RUS	2760	6
6	Fabiano Caruana	ITA	2811	5½

Nakamura won the Armageddon tiebreaker

50...♖xd7 51.♕xd7 ♘b6 52.♕b7 ♗c5 53.e6 fxe6 54.♘e5 ♖f8 55.♕c6 ♗d4 56.♕xe6+ ♔h7 57.♕d6



Now, after 57...♗xe5 58.♕xf8 ♗f6 59.♕c5, Black can't save the knight and loses. If Black could magically move the knight to a square like e7, there would be very good drawing chances. Anand resigned here and the tournament began anew!

■ ■ ■

Still, according to the tournament rules, Anand had the better tiebreak, and would therefore be the overall winner. But during the final rounds of the rapid part, the organizers began to feel that blitz games would be a more attractive tiebreaker for the audience. And at the start of the last rapid round it was announced that in case of a tie for first, blitz games would decide the tournament winner.

For Anand this came as an unpleasant surprise, and he declined to play two blitz games, as was suggested first. But he did agree to play one Armageddon game. A kind gesture towards the sponsor, although he may have regretted his compliance later. But if he did, he didn't show it. Still, the Armageddon game itself must have been a cold shower. It all was over in a couple of minutes.

After the flip of a coin, Anand chose White and an extra minute on the clock, with draw odds for Nakamura. For the American this was all fine, as in Armageddon he tends to prefer Black. He had little doubt about the outcome anyway. As he said after-

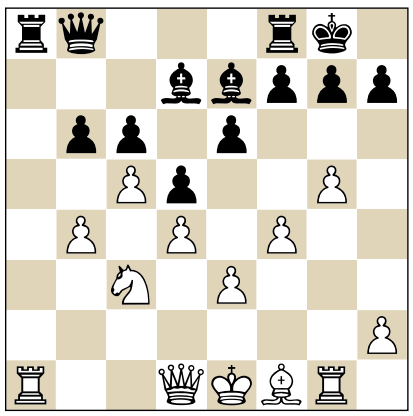
wards: 'I thought my chances were 90 per cent that I was going to win. I didn't care if it was one or two games. I just figured I was going to win.'

QO 1.5 – D37
Vishy Anand
Hikaru Nakamura
Zurich 2015 (tiebreak)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗e7 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♗f4 0-0 6.e3 ♘bd7 7.c5 ♘h5

As in the classical game that Anand won. There he played 8.♗d3, now he chooses a more aggressive approach.

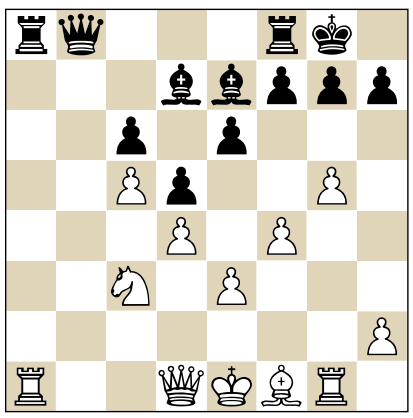
8.♗e5 c6 9.g4 ♘hf6 10.♖g1 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♘d7 12.♘xd7 ♗xd7 13.f4 b6 14.b4 a5 15.a3 axb4 16.axb4 ♕b8 17.g5



White's aggression on the kingside leaves his own king vulnerable.

17...bxc5 18.bxc5

Taking on a8 first would have limited the damage a bit.



18...♕b4

Even more killing was 18...♕b2.

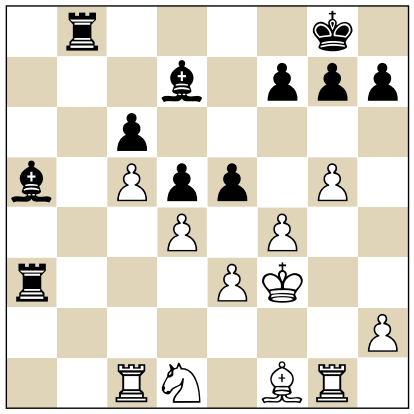
19.♖c1 ♖a3 20.♕d2 ♗d8

Adding to White's problems. Anand's play is unrecognizable.

NEW IN CHESS

And then it was all over in about 5 minutes. Vishy Anand and Hikaru Nakamura put on their jackets again after the Armageddon tiebreaker.

21.♘d1 ♕xd2+ 22.♔xd2 ♗a5+ 23.♔e2 ♖b8 24.♔f3 e5!



Decisive and blitzed out without thinking.

25.fxe5 ♗f5!

And no matter how long you look at White's position, it's totally lost.

26.♖g2 ♗e4+ 27.♔f4 ♗xg2 28.♗xg2 ♖a2 29.♗f3 ♗d2

White resigned.

Nakamura was understandably happy with this new win after Gibraltar. 'I played quite well from start to finish in Gibraltar and in many ways I deserved to win that tournament. Here it was quite different. I won quite a few games, but was also a bit lucky. It was much more of a struggle to win.'

His recent results must have given his hopes to one day play for the World Championship a new boost, but Nakamura was reluctant to deviate from the observation that he has been making regularly over the past few years: that he just wants to improve and play better. Not because he doesn't want to be more specific. 'That's the fault of FIDE, I can say I want to play for the world title, but so many things in the cycle are unclear. At the end of the day I think that if I play well, good things will happen. This seems to be true at least for the first six weeks of this year. In general I am enjoying playing chess right now – for the first time in quite a while. I think I am just happier in life in general. I cannot explain it in words, but it's been a while that I've been enjoying playing tournaments so much. I am just happy and enjoying everything.' ■

TATA STEEL

TATA

Tata Steel congratulates Magnus Carlsen for winning Tata Steel Chess Tournament 2015

The 77th Tata Steel Chess Tournament was a great success and we welcomed 2000 players (professionals and amateurs) from around the world. The live broadcasts were followed by an average of 70.000 viewers each day.

We look forward to welcoming you again, either in Wijk aan Zee or via **www.tatasteelchess.com** next year (January 15 – 31st, 2016).

www.tatasteelchess.com

Fair & Square

'Have I ever mentioned you play an irritating game of chess, Mr. Spock?'
(Captain Kirk – after Spock had announced a forced mate in their 3D chess game, in the first-ever episode of Star Trek. Sadly, Spock (Leonard Nimoy, 1931-2015) has now boldly gone)

Mikhail Tal: 'If grandmasters are intent on making a draw, even flamethrowers can't make them want to fight.'

Lev Polugaevsky: 'Analysis, if it is really carried out with a complete concentration of his powers, forms and completes a chess player.'

Tony Robbins: 'Investment success means learning how to be the chess player, not the chess piece.'
(The author and life coach, in his new book, Money: Master the Game)

Ivan Sokolov: 'It doesn't matter whether it's good or bad, I like it or I don't, the truth is that chess engines have changed the way we perceive the game, the way the game is played, and the way we analyse it. Once [Peter] Leko said: "In modern times who cares if something looks ugly if it works! And in the past some ugly-looking moves were not even analysed…"'

Bent Larsen: 'Normal people have to see Naples before they die, but a chess grandmaster has to win Hoogovens first.'
(The Great Dane about the forerunner of today's Tata Steel Tournament)

Marlon Brando: 'It's chess at 90 mph.'
(The actor interviewed in Life magazine – April 1, 1966 – on working with actor/director Charlie Chaplin in his 1967 movie The Countess from Hong Kong)

Boris Spassky: 'I find myself in the endgame of my life.'
(The 10th World Champion speaking to the Russian website rsport.ru in early January, ahead of his 78th birthday)

Garry Kasparov: 'To my surprise I found that when other top players in the pre-computer age (before 1995, roughly) wrote about games in magazines and newspaper columns, they often made more mistakes in their annotations than the players had made at the board.'

Walter Tevis: 'I think it would be good if women don't play in women's tournaments at all. Doing so only reinforces the notion of their inferiority. I would like to see chess be a sexless game.'
(The author of The Hustler and The Queen's Gambit)

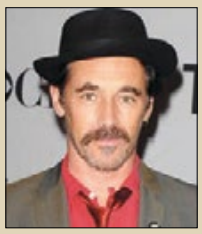
Margaret Mead: 'Women could be just as good at chess, but why would they want to be?'
(The famous anthropologist's view)

Irina Krush: 'I believe chess can bring me closer to the spiritual part of this world in a way that simple material stuff can't.'

Wesley So: 'That's what some people say: you don't have to play in order to get higher in the rankings. You just wait for them to get old.'
(On the Tata Steel live stream)

Gawain Jones: 'Arrived at Bunratty Castle hotel. Taking it seriously this year so arriving a day early to acclimatise. See you in the bar!'
(On Twitter)

Ron Borges: 'It's going to be a mental chess match of probing and plotting, setting up your moves and preparing to counter your opponent until you can land the blows that count the most.'
(The Boston Herald sports journalist, reviewing the Super Bowl XLIX match-up between the Seattle Seahawks and New England Patriots, that was dramatically won in the final seconds by the Patriots)



Mark Rylance: 'He would have been a champion chess player, in that he's usually seven or eight moves ahead of the other players around him.'
(The English actor, on playing Henry the VIII's cunning advisor, Thomas Cromwell, in the new BBC adaptation of Wolf Hall, based on Hilary Mantel's Man Booker prize-winning novels, Wolf Hall and Bring Up The Bodies)

Stacey Dash: 'I think the fact that he is a numbers guy, makes me believe that this is a chess move. I don't believe he's not going to run.'
(The sceptical Fox News panellist, on the day Mitt Romney announced to supporters that he would not launch a third Republican US presidential bid)

On the Defence

Not long ago one of my Amersfoort teammates asked me whether I could recommend a good book on defence. It's not as easy as you might think! In the end I came up with the Defence part of Jacob Aagaard's book *Attack and Defence* (Quality Chess) and John Nunn's recent book on Lasker, *John Nunn's Chess Course* (Gambit), which has a good chapter on defence. Apart from that... not too impressive!

Then, while looking through a list of recent books, I saw a revised edition of a book I'd read when I was very young: Andy Soltis' *The Art of Defence in Chess*. Strange to forget a title like that! So why had the author felt the need to update the book 40 years on?

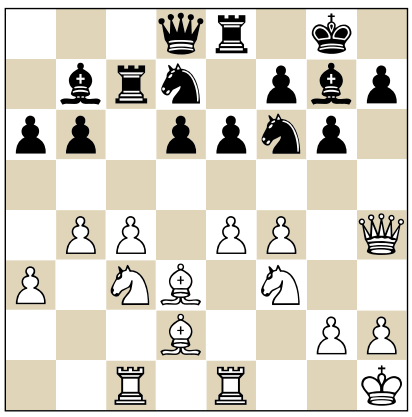
As he explains, 'This book came about because of something I didn't expect to find in my bookcase. It was one of my earliest efforts, *The Art of Defence in Chess*. I had fond memories of it so I opened it up and leafed through the pages. It was not what I remembered. The book was drastically out of date. This had to be completely rewritten I thought (…). Because much of what I wrote – about the virtues of solid but passive restraint for instance – makes little sense nowadays, it would fail against today's attacking players. They think differently from those of 30-plus years ago.'

That is definitely a valid point: advances in opening theory are the most obvious difference between the 1970s and the present time, but there have been at least as many changes in the way players approach the middlegame. They are however much harder to capture and quantify, so it's very interesting to see an author attempting to do this.

To illustrate his point Soltis presents a game between Naiditsch and Svidler at Dortmund 2004.

Arkadij Naiditsch
Peter Svidler
Dortmund 2004

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.♗d3 ♗c5 6.♘b3 ♗e7 7.0-0 d6 8.c4 ♘f6 9.♘c3 ♘bd7 10.f4 ♕c7 11.♕e2 b6 12.♗d2 ♗b7 13.♖ae1 0-0 14.♔h1 g6 15.♘d4 ♖fe8 16.♘f3 ♖ad8 17.♘g5 ♗f8 18.♕f2 ♗g7 19.b4 ♘h5 20.♖c1 ♖c8 21.a3 ♕d8 22.♘f3 ♖c7 23.♖fe1 ♘hf6 24.♕h4



Soltis explains: 'In 1974, the year I wrote *The Art of Defence in Chess*, this would have been considered a favourable position for White, a plus-over-equals advantage at least: White has a substantial advantage in space. Black has failed to execute any of the freeing moves, such as ...b5 or ...d5, that he needs to survive in the Maroczy Bind pawn structure. White will eventually find a winning plan such as with ♖e3, ♘g5, ♖h3 and a breakthrough around h7. And White's attack would have succeeded if Black had played in the manner that served so well for much of the 20th century, with cautious moves such as ...♘f8 to protect h7. But today most masters would prefer to play Black after the move Svidler went for.'

24...♕a8

'Why? Because we realize now that White's space advantage, in this and similar positions, is vastly overrated. And we see Black has a powerful plan of ...♖fc8 and ...♖xc4! ♗xc4 ♖xc4. But you can't sacrifice in even positions can you? That's what 1974 would say if it could speak. Yes you can, we say today. Black would have one pawn for the exchange and powerful pressure on the e4-pawn as compensation after 26...♖xc4.'

> 'After all, if you can calculate it, then it's not dangerous!'

25.♕h3 ♖ec8 26.e5 dxe5 27.♘xe5 ♘xe5 28.fxe5 ♘d7 29.♗f4 ♖xc4 30.♗xc4 ♖xc4 31.♕g3 h5 32.♘e2 ♘xe5 33.♖xc4 ♘xc4 34.h4 ♕d8 35.♗g5 ♕d7 36.♘f4 e5 37.♘d3 ♕d5 38.♘f2 ♘d6 39.♖d1 ♘e4 0-1

Soltis comments at the end: 'This is the way chess is played today. Anyone who plays over attacking games of the 21st century will be struck by how they differ from 20th century games. You can argue that the biggest change since the 1970s is that our play has been refined by computer analysis. But it

was transformed earlier by the revolution in middlegame thinking led by Mikhail Tal.'

How does that strike you? I'm afraid that I disagree with most of it. In particular, I don't think that the example chosen is a particularly good example of the differences between 21st century chess and 1970's chess.

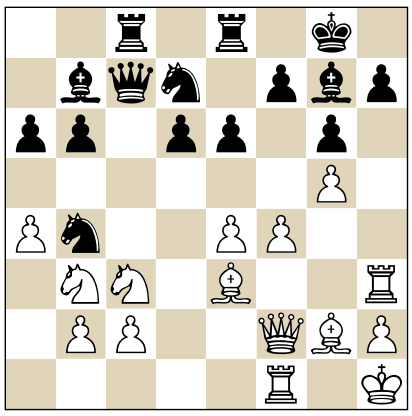
Let's take the game first. I was playing these types of positions with Black in the late 1980s and early 1990s (usually playing 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.♗d3 g6) and I wasn't remotely worried by White's kingside play! I certainly didn't invent the system either. Take a look at the moves leading up to the diagram. White plays 17.♘g5, then back with 22.♘f3, he plays 20.♖c1 to cover his c-pawn and then 23.♖fe1 (taking the rook off the f-file – quite a concession from an attacking point of view) to hold his e-pawn. I don't get a feel of a building attack in any way: White just looks like he's trying to fill in gaps in a very porous position. It doesn't take a modern defender to deal with White's play in this game.

Secondly, from the comments to the 24th move, Soltis seems to imply that the difference between 1970's players and modern players is that modern players (I almost wrote 'we' there, but I'm suddenly wondering whether I count as a modern player at the age of 40!) assess the value of space differently, and that modern players see more possibilities in cramped positions. Again, this is something that has been known for many years. After all, we all remember this one don't we!

New Art of Defence in Chess
A Complete Arsenal of Defensive Techniques
by Andy Soltis
Batsford 2014

Anatoly Karpov
Garry Kasparov
Moscow WC match 1985 (24)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e2 e6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.f4 0-0 9.♔h1 ♕c7 10.a4 ♘c6 11.♗e3 ♖e8 12.♗f3 ♖b8 13.♕d2 ♗d7 14.♘b3 b6 15.g4 ♗c8 16.g5 ♘d7 17.♕f2 ♗f8 18.♗g2 ♗b7 19.♖ad1 g6 20.♗c1 ♖bc8 21.♖d3 ♘b4 22.♖h3 ♗g7 23.♗e3



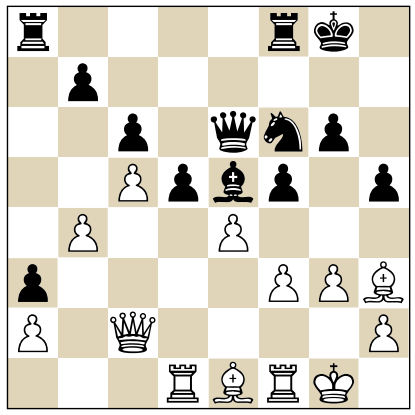
23...♖e7 24.♔g1 ♖ce8 25.♖d1 f5 26.gxf6 ♘xf6 27.♖g3 ♖f7 28.♗xb6 ♕b8 29.♗e3 ♘h5 30.♖g4 ♘f6 31.♖h4 g5 32.fxg5 ♘g4 33.♕d2 ♘xe3 34.♕xe3 ♘xc2 35.♕b6 ♗a8 36.♖xd6 ♖b7 37.♕xa6 ♖xb3 38.♖xe6 ♖xb2 39.♕c4 ♔h8 40.e5 ♕a7+ 41.♔h1 ♗xg2+ 42.♔xg2 ♘d4+ 0-1

Of course it's all very well criticizing, but what is the essence of modern defence then? Well it *is* all about the computer isn't it? First of all, modern opening preparation – with its countless concrete precise nullifying variations – puts a big barrier in the way of developing an attacking position right from the opening. Just try getting at that black king when the Berlin Wall appears on the board!

Secondly, though players still aim for the initiative and attacking-looking positions in practical games (because that's a way of putting your opponent under pressure and eliciting mistakes), players have become much more realistic about the objective value of such play. Looking back at the analysis I did in the 1990s, I can see very clearly that I equated the possession of the initiative with a slight advantage, the implication being that if both sides played well, the side with the initiative could never have anything less than perfect equality. That's just not true anymore (it was never true of course, but now you can prove it!). In analysis, the computer often doesn't just neutralize your initiative: he gives you a little extra kick for good measure to leave you with a slightly worse position.

And finally, the computer has shown us that 'concrete' always trumps 'looks ugly'. Modern players have seen so many amazing concrete computer-discovered resources over the years, that they routinely examine the most risky or disgusting-looking alternatives in defensive situations. After all, if you can calculate it, then it's not dangerous!

Let's show a nice example of this: Anand-Carlsen from the recent Grenke Chess Classic 2015.



Anand-Carlsen
Baden-Baden 2015 (4)
position after 24.e4

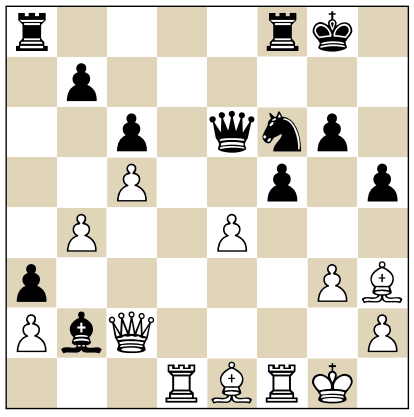
Ask me with my 1990's mindset to evaluate this, and I say: 'White initia-

New In Chess Stars

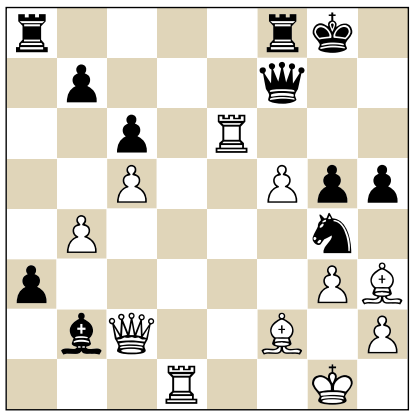
★★★★★	Instant classic
★★★★	Excellent
★★★	Good
★★	Mediocre
★	Awful

Sadler on Books

tive, he can never be worse here'
24...dxe4 25.fxe4 ♗b2



That is 21st century defence. The point is that it's not just 'hit and hope': it's based on calculation and a measured evaluation of the risks. Note how this defence changes the situation: once the pawn on a2 disappears, then White can just end up lost if his initiative dissipates. That's not fair!
After 25...♘g4, then my 1990s mindset is absolutely right: 26.exf5 gxf5 27.♖f3 followed by ♗f1. Might well be even for Black with good play, but White can never be worse.
26.exf5 ♕xa2 27.♗f2 g5 28.♖fe1 ♕f7 29.♖e6 ♘g4



Another real 21st century defence moment. In his interview after the game, Magnus explained that he thought for a long time here. Obviously if White can reroute his bishop on h3 to c4 via f1, then he will stand very nicely. The chance of getting embarrassingly mated after 28...♘g4 was completely present, but Magnus couldn't see it so he went for it. Concreteness always wins!
Magnus won the game and if you want to see how that happened, have a look at the comments by his second Peter Heine Nielsen on page 67.

There is also another huge element to defence in the 21st century, and you can call it the competitive element. With the Sofia rules and the emphasis that players are putting on physical fitness, the ability to suffer for long periods in slightly worse and cheerless positions – also at faster time controls as the game progresses – has become an essential skill at the top level. Certainly any player who has ambitions to match Magnus has to be able to do it! This is something again that Soltis doesn't touch on at all: his focus is mainly on dealing with direct attacks against the king.

This review is sounding extremely negative now, so I do need to redress the balance somewhat. This book is a reasonable introduction to the art of defence. The chapter 'Weapons of Defence' in particular is a good instructional chapter explaining all the basis defensive tools you can use to relieve a defensive position such as 'Closing / controlling attacking lines', 'Repairing weaknesses', 'Neutralizing a dangerous piece' or 'Striking in the centre'. And the chapter 'You against Tal' in which you get the chance to try and refute some of Tal's attacks is also good fun. The definitive work on defence however still has to be written. 2½ stars!

★★½

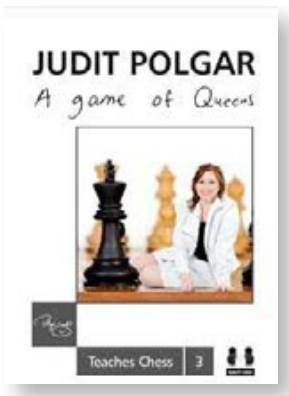
I guess many men would have wished the perfect defensive manual had already been written in the 1990s while they were getting mated by Judit! *A Game of Queens* by Judit Polgar (Quality Chess) completes the trilogy detailing Judit's phenomenal career and it's just as good as the rest! I was reading through Yasser Seirawan's autobiography *Chess Duels: My Games with the World Champions* the other day and thinking how wonderful it must be to be able to define your career in terms of great games with the best players of the past 30-40 years. You have the same feeling with Judit: whole chapters on Kasparov, Karpov, Kortchnoi and Anand… all filled with games of mind-breaking complexity – what a career! Nothing more to say really – buy, admire and enjoy! 5 stars!

★★★★★

Bologan's Black Weapons by Victor Bologan (New In Chess) is a huge 500-page tome dealing with Black's answers to anything White can throw at him after 1.e4 e5 except for the Ruy Lopez. The book has a number of unusual features. First of all, Bologan recommends two lines against every White opening – an aggressive line, and a more circumspect equalizing approach. This is a nice approach which gives you a choice depending on how much time you have for your preparation before a game! Another feature is that all the diagrams are presented from the Black side. It has honestly cost me a couple of months to be at peace with this innovation: it looks completely wrong to me! And finally, the book contains a huge number of readability features. Once again to be honest, my first instinct was to put the book away and go lie down in a darkened room: too many sidebars, too many icons, I found it very hard initially to focus on the content. In this case however, my opinion has changed as I have used the book more and more. Once you get the hang of it, then it is surprisingly easy to quickly locate the one variation you want to play amongst the mass of variations and transpositions.

The content itself is excellent! Bologan starts off with 30 pages

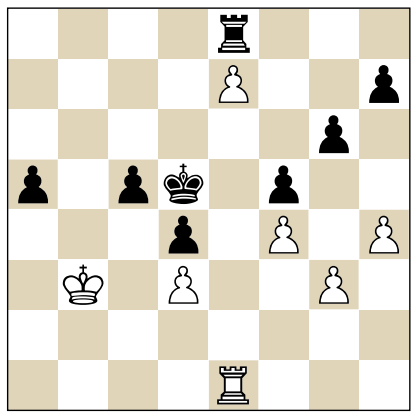
A Game of Queens
Judit Polgar Teaches Chess 3
by Judit Polgar
Quality Chess 2014



of strategic ideas and themes. It's nothing revolutionary, but it brings together very nicely all the pawn structures and some typical piece structures, and cross-references to these specific openings. He has also thought up some very evocative names for a number of them. For example, 'Big Bertha' for the advance ...h5-h4 against a pawn on g3 supported by a rook on h8, or 'The Black Shark' to describe a black dark-squared bishop lurking on a7 aiming at the f2-square! As for the lines themselves, I'm no 1.e4 e5 expert of course but I haven't been able to find any gaps at all in the repertory. Just out of curiosity, I checked the lines against the Belgrade Gambit (1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.d4 exd4 5.♘d5) which an Amersfoort teammate has played continually for the past 5 years... I think he might have less fun if the lines in this book become commonplace! Excellent reference, lots of good ideas: 4 stars!

★★★★

The last book is a very unusual one: *Liquidation on the Chess Board* by Joel Benjamin (New In Chess). It just shows the complexity and richness of chess that you can write a whole book only about transposing (how to/when to) into pawn endings from all sorts of material balances (queen endings, rook endings, bishop endings etc…)! I thought it might be instructive but perhaps a bit of a dull read, but it's been a joy to dip into. All those treacherous pawn endings that look winning but aren't – it can all go so deliciously wrong! Let's take a look at a few examples!



Banas-Borik
Cihak 1969
position after 48.♔b3

'The pawn ending is available to Black but he must weigh the consequences very carefully.'

48...♔d6

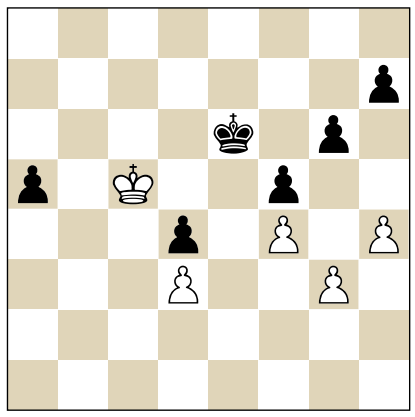
48...c4+ 49.dxc4+ ♔d6 50.c5+ ♔xc5 51.♖e5+ ♔d6 52.♖xa5 ♖xe7 53.♔c4 ♖e3 54.♔xd4 ♖xg3 55.h5, 'with a draw in the offing'.

49.♔c4 ♖xe7??

'Black badly misjudges the pawn ending. With an extra pawn to play with Black should have options, and indeed.'

49...a4 'would have avoided disaster.' 50.♖a1 ♖xe7 51.♖xa4 and 'White will be fine with his active king and rook, but look at what happens now'.

50.♖xe7 ♔xe7 51.♔xc5 ♔e6



½-½.

'Perhaps White thought the offer was a gift because 52.♔xd4?? ♔d6 53.♔c4 ♔c6 54.d4 a4 wins for Black in clas-

Bologan's Black Weapons in the Open Games
How to Play for a Win if White Avoids the Ruy Lopez
by Victor Bologan
New In Chess 2014

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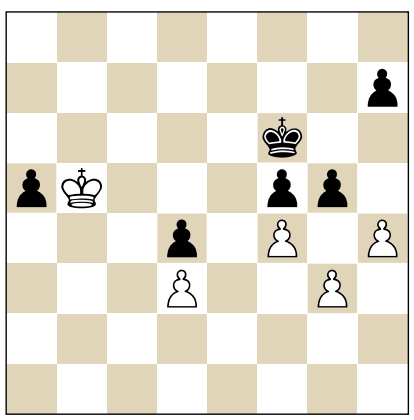
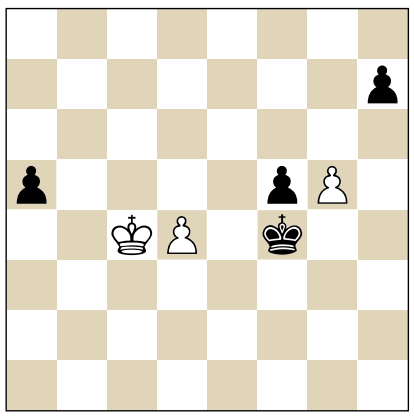
Sadler on Books

sic outside passed pawn style. But the d-pawn serves White's interests. With 52.♔b5! he not only grabs the a-pawn but will get the d-pawn as well! After 52...♔d5 53.♔xa5 ♔c5 54.♔a4 reserve moves on the kingside won't help Black because White can shuffle his king between a5 and a4 until the Black king has to give ground.'

Then Benjamin points out a fantastic way in which Black could have tried to get counterplay. I'll just give you the main line, but you get an idea how wonderfully concrete and tactical these pawn endings are:
51...♔f6 The game continuation was 51...♔e6. **52.♔b5 g5**



53.hxg5+ ♔g6 54.♔c4!
Brilliant!
54...♔h5 55.♔xd4 ♔g4 56.♔c4 ♔xg3 57.d4 ♔xf4

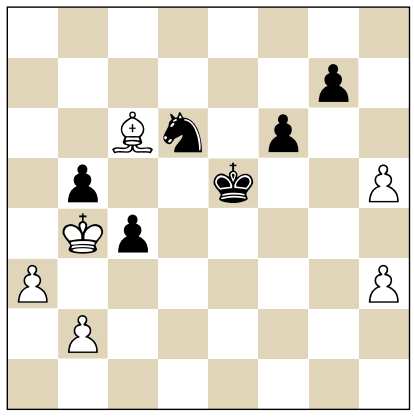


Funny isn't it? I see this position and my first instinct is that Black is better... But when you count it's winning for White!
58.d5 ♔e5 59.♔c5 f4 60.d6 f3 61.d7 f2 62.d8♕ f1♕ 63.♕e7+ ♔f5 64.♕f6+
And White wins. Nice!

The book works quite addictively in fact: the more examples you play through, the more you try to store in your brain.

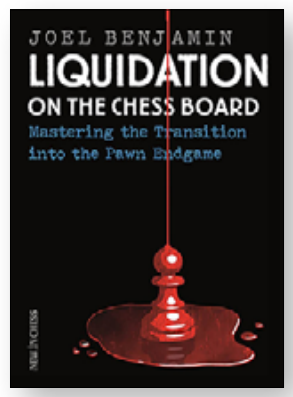
You suddenly realise that it's dealing with one of the big moments of uncertainty in practical chess: after 6 hours of play, clock running down, tiredness setting in, are you liquidating to a clear win or messing things up and throwing away a half point? Are you cleverly saving a half point or throwing away any chance of still saving the game? So many ways to go wrong!

Look at this one:

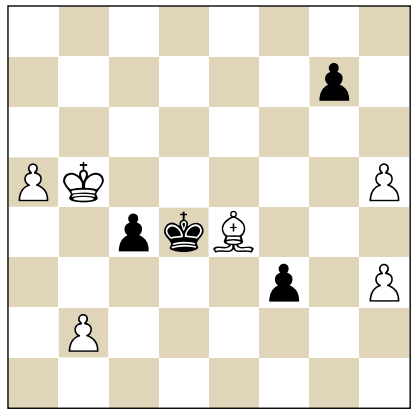


Tseitlin-Krnan
Kapuskasing 2004
position after 56.♔b4

'Both minor pieces have freedom of movement, showcasing the advantages and disadvantages of each piece. The variations are also chock full of pawn endings.'
56...f5 57.♔c5 ♘e4+ 58.♔xb5 ♔d4
'The a-pawn is unstoppable, but Black is poised to queen as well.'
59.a4 f4 60.a5 f3 61.♗xe4

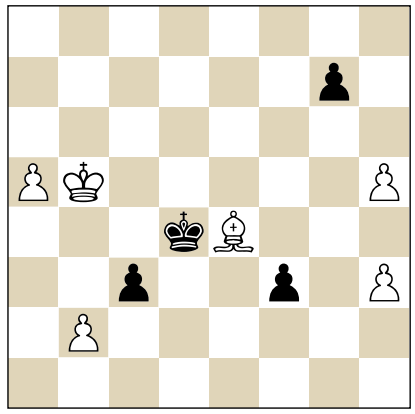


Liquidation on the Chess Board
Mastering the Transition into the Pawn Ending
by Joel Benjamin
New In Chess 2015



'It seems too good to be true...and it is! Black has prepared a devilish trap.'
61...c3!!

'It seems too good to be true... and it is! Black has prepared a devilish trap.'



An amazing little intermezzo!
62.a6
62.bxc3+ ♔xe4 'and only Black queens'.
62...f2 63.♗d3 ♔xd3 64.a7 cxb2 65.a8♕ b1♕+ 66.♔c5 ♕c1+ 67.♔d6 f1♕ 68.♕a6+ ♕c4 69.♕a3+ ♔c2 0-1

A really interesting book! Almost 4½ stars but we'll leave it at 4!

★★★★

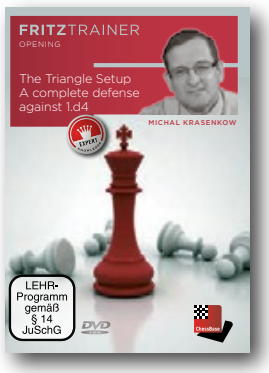
NEW!

Mihail Marin: Winning against the King's Indian - With the main line

In the classical system of the King's Indian White develops naturally and refrains from chasing ghosts looking for a refutation of Black's set-up. White instead relies on the fact that natural play should yield him a small but lasting advantage. The main question is whether White can retain the harmony of his pieces in the blocked position of the Mar del Plata attack (7...Nc6 8.d5 Ne7) when both sides attack on opposite wings. The best answer to that question is given by the classical system with 9.Nd2, in which White's knights and bishops cooperate harmoniously. Many great players of the past and the present have used and use this system successfully. Until play becomes very concrete, usually around moves 18-20, positional understanding is far more useful than computer assistance. At first, engines are sceptical about many objectively best white moves, and the author has seen this as a challenge to prove that in certain positions human understanding is still more valuable than the calculating powers of the computer. The videos explaining the Mar del Plata Attack (which form the main part of this DVD) offer strategic guidance and show typical tactical ideas, while presenting a detailed, solid and aggressive repertoire. The less forcing lines (such as 7...Nbd7, 7...Na6, 7...exd4 and 6...Bg4) are covered on a more general level. A new feature that helps the viewer to understand and learn the opening better and faster is the interactive format. Most of the videos alternate general explanations with quizzes giving the viewer a chance to test his knowledge and to increase his skills.

29,90 €

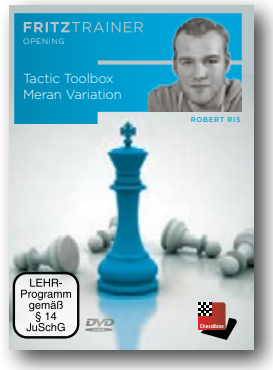
Michal Krasenkow: The Triangle Setup - A complete defense against 1.d4



The Semi-Slav defense (1.d4 d5 followed by ...e7-e6 and ...c7-c6) is one of the most popular opening set-ups for Black. Black can follow two entirely different concepts. One includes an early ...Ng8-f6 and leads to a number of popular and deeply analysed systems: the Meran, the Anti-Meran, the Botvinnik, the Moscow, the Anti- Moscow, the Westphalian, etc. The other, in which Black refrains from ...Ng8-f6 at an early stage, is presented by GM Michal Krasenkow on this DVD. Black keeps a choice between two double-edged interesting systems: the Noteboom variation (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c6 4.Nf3 dxc4) and the Stonewall (... f7-f5) if White plays an early e2-e3. Of course Black's decision to refrain from an early ...Ng8-f6 gives White other options, the most important being the Slav gambit (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c6 4.e4 etc.). Therefore, Black's set-up may lead to a whole range of different and interesting positions, which help the black player to broaden his strategic and tactical understanding. This makes the Noteboom/Stonewall opening repertoire a particularly good choice for young, aspiring players.

29,90 €

Robert Ris: Tactic Toolbox Meran Variation



The Meran Variation in the Semi-Slav (1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.e3 Nbd7 6.Bd3 dxc4 7.Bxc4 b5) is a strategically and dynamically complex opening full of tactical possibilities. And this DVD provides you with a comprehensive overview of typical tactical patterns for both sides. Positional concepts are also explained. White often tries to exploit his lead in development by going for a quick assault against the black king, no matter where it resides! Black hopes to survive White's aggression and to counterattack in the centre, and this clash of plans leads to double-edged and tactical positions. In interactive format IM Robert Ris offers you a lot of exercises, including hints and advice that help you to know key tactical patterns of this variation to play it with success. The DVD is a must for those who want to learn more about this opening, and a pleasure for those who enjoy razor sharp battles of the world's greatest players!

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Jan Timman

Gibraltar turns into Nakamura show

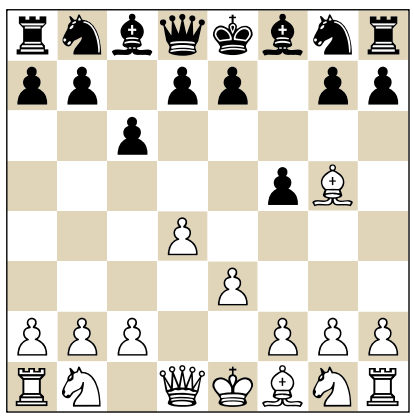
Hikaru Nakamura demonstrated in Gibraltar that super-GMs can also show their extra class in open tournaments. The American won his first six games and finished the unbeaten winner. **Jan Timman** still regards Nakamura as a possible challenger of Magnus Carlsen, especially if he refines his endgame technique.

Early last year, Nakamura had already decided to play his first tournament of 2015 in Gibraltar, which meant that he would skip the Tata tournament in Wijk aan Zee. Although there was a day between the two events, it didn't make sense to play both. Nakamura had no regrets. In an interview with *Chess.com* immediately after the tournament he explained that the weather in Gibraltar was better than in the wintry north. There was also more to do there; you could go down to the water or visit the town of Gibraltar. In addition, he had won the tournament of 2008 there and considered it time to play another open tournament.

The open Tradewise Gibraltar Chess Festival is so strongly contested that if you score well, you end up playing in a strong grandmaster tournament. In the first round there is some room for improvisation, but I don't think Nakamura will be in any hurry to repeat the experiment he tried out there.

HD 12.12 – A80
Jovana Vojinovic
Hikaru Nakamura
Gibraltar 2015(2)

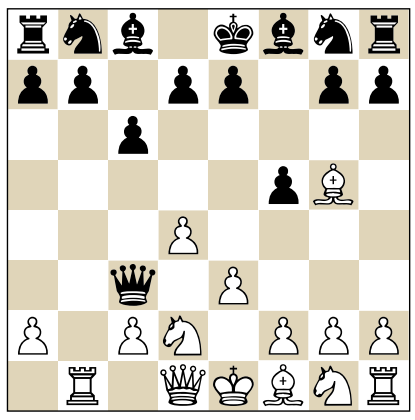
1.d4 f5 2.♗g5 c6 3.e3



3...♕b6

A strange way to handle the Dutch Defence. Black doesn't bother about his development and starts grabbing pawns.

4.♘d2 ♕xb2 5.♖b1 ♕c3



6.g4 Far too enterprising. What White is in fact doing is taking away the natural defences of his king without achieving anything concrete. Simple and strong was 6.♗d3 d6 7.♘e2, ♕a5 8.0-0, after which White has completed his development, while Black has only played his queen. As it was, Nakamura managed to put his house in order with 6...♕a5 and quietly win the game.

Nakamura immediately set a blistering pace, winning five games on the trot. Sometimes he didn't go for sharp opening lines to play for a win, and in Round 4 he beat Grandelius with surprising ease.

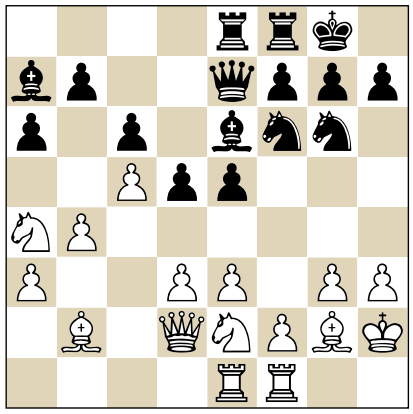
EO 20.8 – A22
Hikaru Nakamura
Nils Grandelius
Gibraltar 2015 (4)

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e5 3.g3 ♘c6 4.♗g2 ♗c5 5.a3 a6 6.e3 ♗a7 7.♘ge2 d6 8.b4 0-0 9.d3 ♘e7 10.0-0 c6 11.h3 ♗e6 12.♗b2 ♕d7 13.♔h2 ♘g6 14.♕d2

SOPHIE TRIAY

Hikaru Nakamura was also moving fast and furious in the traditional Battle of the Sexes, a social highlight during the Gibraltar Festival.

d5 15.c5 ♖ae8 16.♘a4 ♕e7 17.♖ae1



Nakamura has gone for a quiet English set-up and cannot really boast an advantage. With all pieces still on the board, every decision is important, a factor that usually favours the stronger player. White has just taken his queen's rook to e1 and is ready for the advance f2-f4.

17...e4? The wrong reaction. Black should have gone for 17...♘d7! 18.f4 f5, when the chances are roughly equal.

18.♗xf6!

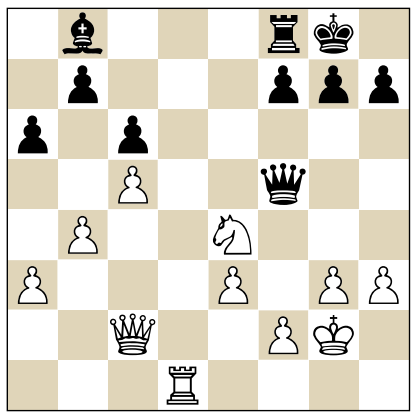
This is Black's problem. White gives up the bishop pair to increase his influence in the centre.

18...♕xf6 19.dxe4 dxe4 20.♘ac3 The black e-pawn is very weak now and will eventually be lost.

20...♗f5 21.♘d4 ♗b8 22.♕c2

Now the e-pawn can no longer be defended adequately.

22...♘h4 23.♗xe4 ♖xe4 24.♘xe4 ♕g6 25.♘xf5 ♘f3+ 26.♔g2 ♘xe1+ 27.♖xe1 ♕xf5 28.♖d1



Accurate play. White takes control of the d-file, since 28...♖e8 will now be met by 29.♕c4.

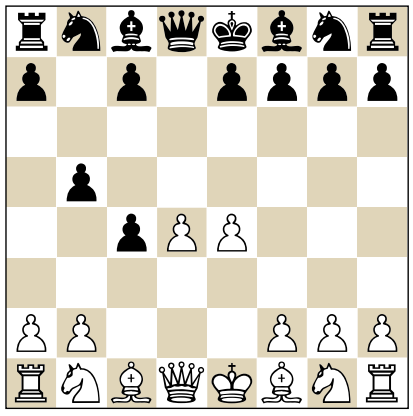
28...h5 29.♕c4 ♕e5 30.h4 ♕e7 31.♘g5 ♖e8 32.♖d4 g6 33.♕d3 ♕f8 34.♖d7 ♖e7 35.f4 1-0

In Round 5, Nakamura went for a speculative line that is becoming more and more fashionable these days.

QG 3.2 – D20
Baskaran Adhiban
Hikaru Nakamura
Gibraltar 2015 (5)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 b5

Old theory books have nothing good to say about this seemingly primitive covering move, but according to more modern insights, it is the first step towards a future exchange sacrifice.

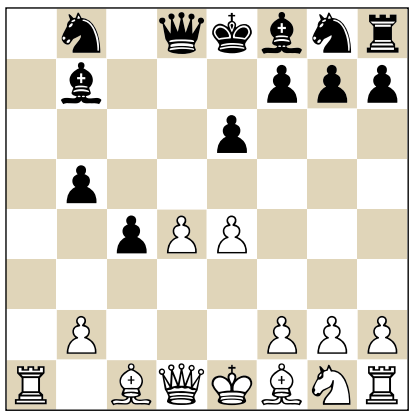


4.a4 c6 5.♘c3 Adhiban took a lot of time over this obvious developing move. This is a sign of uncertainty, because Black can now go for a playable variation with 5...b4 if he wants. After the move order 5.axb5 cxb5 6.♘c3 he would not have had that option.

5...a6 Nakamura wants to try out the exchange sacrifice anyway.

6.axb5 cxb5 7.♘xb5 axb5 8.♖xa8 ♗b7 9.♖a1 e6

Black cannot really take on e4, for after 9...♗xe4 10.b3 White would clearly be better. After the text he has a check up his sleeve.



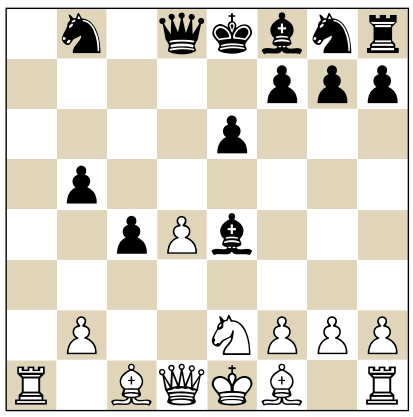
10.♘e2 This is absolutely beyond me. If White wants to refute Black's plans, he should at least go 10.f3!, which featured as follows last year:

A) 10...♘c6 11.♘e2 ♘a5 12.♗e3 ♘b3 13.♖a2 ♗b4+ 14.♘c3 ♘e7 15.♗d3! ♘c6 16.d5 exd5 17.exd5 ♕xd5 18.♗e4 ♕e5 19.0-0 0-0, and a draw was agreed in Blübaum-Nisipeanu, Bad Wiessee 2014. But White could have got a large advantage with 20.♕d7!. Black would probably have been better off postponing his knight jump to b3, so that White could not have developed his bishop to d3.

B) 10...f5. An advance that leads to very sharp play, but it hardly looks reliable for Black. Gharamian-Cornette, Nimes 2014, continued 11.exf5 ♘e7 12.♖a7 ♕b6 13.♖xb7 ♕xb7 14.fxe6 ♘f5 15.g4! ♗b4+ 16.♔f2 ♘e7 17.b3, and White was winning, although the game ended in a draw.

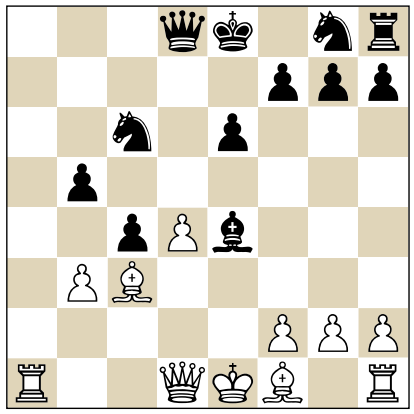
I would like to know what Nakamura had intended after 10.f3.

10...♗xe4



11.b3 Apparently the point of the previous move. But Black is not forced to take the pawn.

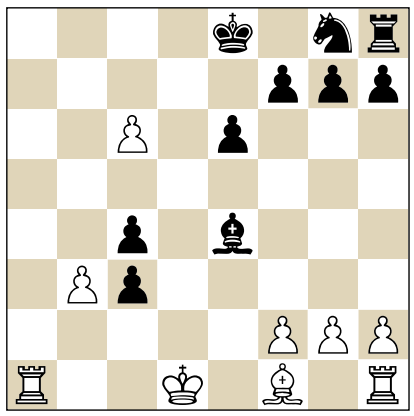
11...♘c6 Threatening a knight sortie to b4. **12.♘c3 ♗b4 13.♗d2 ♗xc3 14.♗xc3**



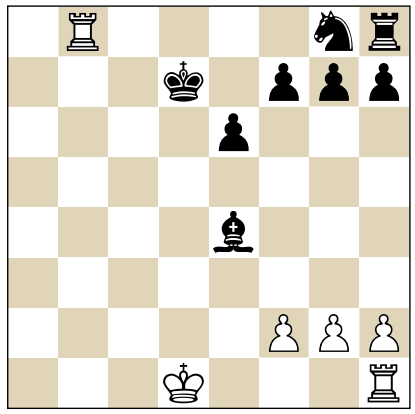
14...b4

The white game plan has been refuted. If the bishop withdraws, Black will advance his c-pawn. Adhiban makes a last-ditch attempt to salvage things.

15.d5 bxc3 16.dxc6 ♕xd1+ 17.♔xd1



17...cxb3 After 18.♖a8+ ♔e7 19.c7 b2 Black will be there first. **18.c7 ♔d7 19.♖a3 b2 20.c8♕+ ♔xc8 21.♖xc3+ ♔d7 22.♗d3 b1♕+ 23.♗xb1 ♗xb1 24.♖b3 ♗e4 25.♖b8**



25...g5 Black is material up, and the technical phase was in good hands with Nakamura (0-1 after 55 moves).

Crucial for the final result was what happened in Round 6. Nakamura was playing Topalov, who had also decided to play an open tournament again. The battle between the two heavyweights proceeded more or less equally.

RL 7.4 – B51
Hikaru Nakamura
Veselin Topalov
Gibraltar 2015 (6)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗b5+ ♘d7 4.a4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e6 6.d4 cxd4

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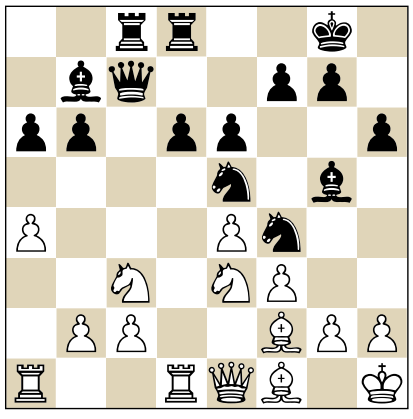
7.♕xd4 a6 8.♗e2 b6 9.0-0 ♗b7 10.♖d1 ♕c7 11.♗g5 ♗e7 12.♘d2 h6 13.♗h4 ♘e5 14.♘f1 ♖d8 15.♗g3 0-0 16.♘e3 ♖c8 17.♔h1 ♖fd8 18.f3 ♘h5 19.♗f2 ♘f4 20.♗f1 ♘fg6 21.♕d2 ♗g5 22.♕e1 ♘f4



White has got nothing out of a Sicilian opening. On the contrary: Black has got very active play.

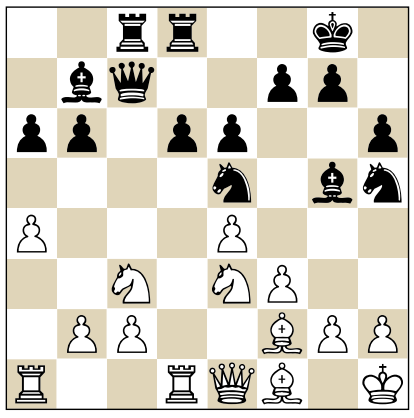
Gibraltar 2015

1	Hikaru Nakamura	USA	2776	8½	2919
2	David Howell	ENG	2670	8	2818
3	Hou Yifan	CHN	2673	7½	2772
4	Nikita Vitiugov	RUS	2735	7½	2770
5	Veselin Topalov	BUL	2800	7½	2767
6	Dennis Wagner	GER	2501	7½	2759
7	Wei Yi	CHN	2675	7½	2754
8	Baskaran Adhiban	IND	2630	7½	2750
9	Pentala Harikrishna	IND	2723	7½	2748
10	Axel Bachmann	PAR	2629	7½	2722
11	Maxim Matlakov	RUS	2695	7½	2667
12	Peter Svidler	RUS	2739	7	2719
13	Yu Yangyi	CHN	2724	7	2707
14	Dmitry Jakovenko	RUS	2733	7	2700
15	Daniel Naroditsky	USA	2622	7	2698
16	Richard Rapport	HUN	2716	7	2677
17	Tamir Nabaty	ISR	2579	7	2615
18	Emil Sutovsky	ISR	2637	7	2605
19	Benjamin Bok	NED	2572	7	2582
20	Deep Sengupta	IND	2569	7	2574
21	Chanda Sandipan	IND	2574	7	2526
22	Maxim Rodshtein	ISR	2680	6½	2642
23	M R Babu Lalith	IND	2537	6½	2637
24	Aleksandr Lenderman	USA	2614	6½	2626
25	Grigoriy Oparin	RUS	2551	6½	2621
47	Ju Wenjun	CHN	2547	6½	2621
27	Ivan Cheparinov	BUL	2681	6½	2619
28	Rout Padmini	IND	2388	6½	2608
29	Ivan Lopez Salgado	ESP	2628	6½	2607
30	Eylon Nakar	ISR	2419	6½	2604

256 players, 10 rounds

Yet White has nothing to fear, since there are no obvious weaknesses in his position. Nakamura now decides to go for repetition.

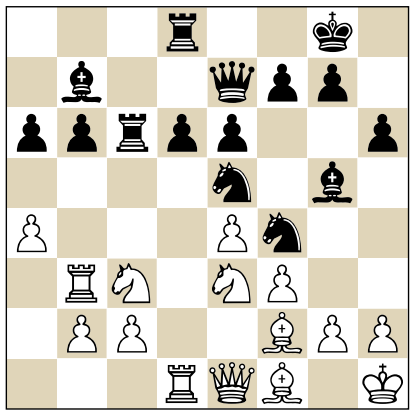
23.♗g3 ♘h5 24.♗f2



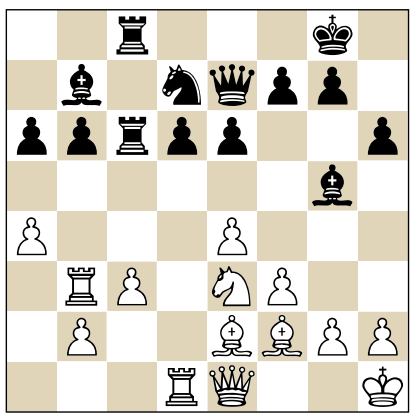
24...♕e7

Topalov was trailing by half a point, which is probably why he wanted to play for a win. The text is somewhat unfortunate, since it causes the b-pawn to lose its cover, while the black queen is unable to bolster Black's initiative on the kingside.

25.♖a3 ♘f4 26.♖b3 ♖c6



27.♘e2 Freeing himself from Black's pressure. **27...♘xe2 28.♗xe2 ♖dc8 29.c3 ♘d7**

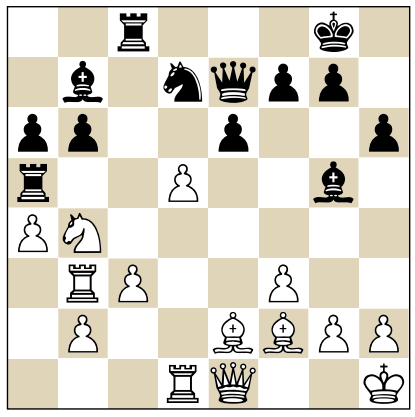


30.♘c2

White can already start thinking about an advantage.

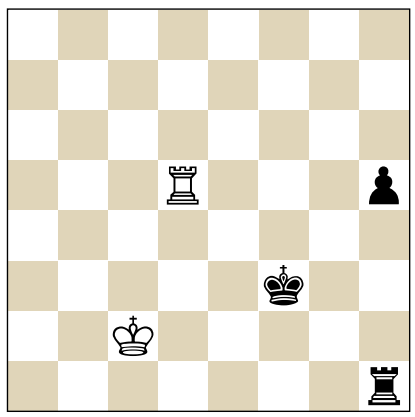
30...d5 A badly timed pawn push, but after 30...♘c5 31.♖a3 Black's life wouldn't be easy either.

31.♘b4 ♖c5 32.exd5 ♖a5



33.♘c6! With a large advantage. White finished the job flawlessly. 'Objectively I never should have won,' Nakamura later observed. But it was the win that virtually guaranteed him final victory.

Nakamura came very close to doing a 'Caruana' in Gibraltar.

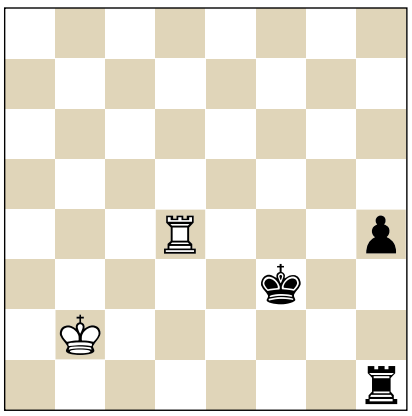


Howell-Nakamura
position after 62...♖h1

A typical position in which the players start looking for the 'Vancura position'. This means that the white rook continues to attack the outside pawn horizontally. If the black king tries to cover the pawn from the g-file, it will be put in check.

63.♔b2? The correct idea but the wrong execution. The narrow route to a draw was 63.♖d3+! ♔e4 64.♖c3!, and only then taking the king to b2. Now Black can avoid the Vancura position.

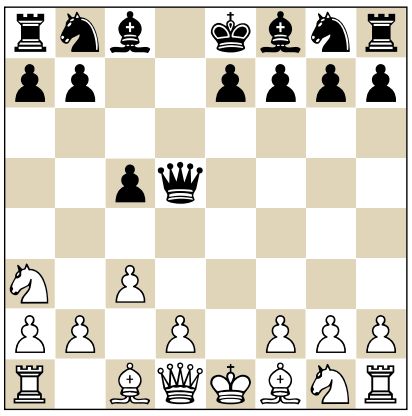
63...h4 64.♖d4



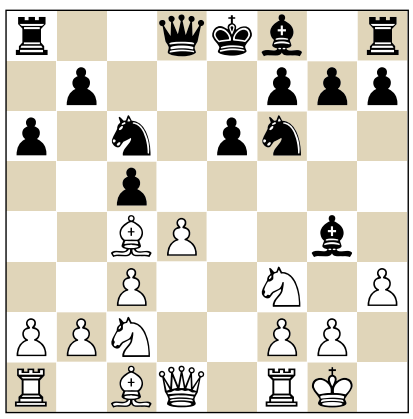
64...♔e3?
Black returns the compliment. He should have played his king towards the passed pawn. After 64...♔g3 White cannot continue his checks, since the rook is too close.
65.♖c4! Now the Vancura position is firmly established.
A disappointment for Nakamura, but the next day he struck mercilessly again.

SI 46.4 – B22
Hikaru Nakamura
Yu Yangyi
Gibraltar 2015 (8)

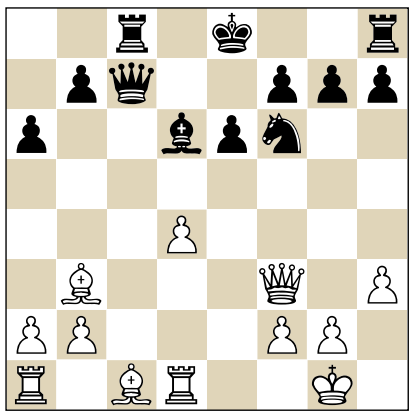
1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♕xd5 4.♘a3



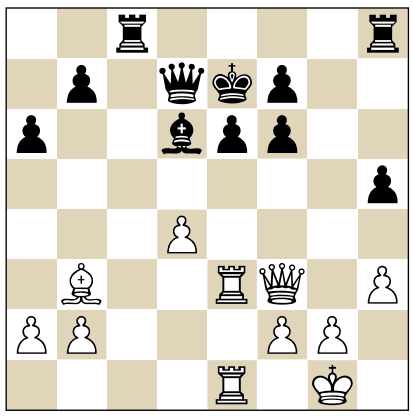
A very unusual move, which has only been played in classical chess by players under 2400 Elo.
But it is a solid way to play nevertheless. Zviagintsev has experimented with 1.e4 c5 2.♘a3, but I think Nakamura's move is better, since it makes b5 and c4 vital squares after Black has advanced his d-pawn.
Another comparison: with the colours reversed, the following line is quite playable in the English defence: 1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♗g2 c6 4.d4 exd4 5.♕xd4 ♘a6. Another advantage of 4.♘a3 is that Black will quickly be forced to make his own decisions.
4...♘f6 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.♗c4 ♕d8 7.0-0 a6 8.♘c2 ♗g4 9.d4 e6 10.h3



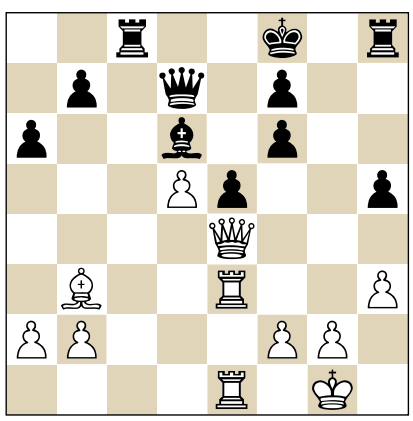
10...♗xf3
This is already a serious mistake, which puts Black with his back against the wall. After 10...♗h5 he would have had reasonable chances of equality.
11.♕xf3 ♖c8 12.♖d1 cxd4 13.♗b3 ♕c7 14.♘xd4 ♘xd4 15.cxd4 ♗d6



16.♗g5
The white position is playing itself. The text increases the pressure on the enemy position.
16...♔e7
Now it goes from bad to worse. Black should have given a pawn with 16...0-0, as after 17.♗xf6 gxf6 18.♕xf6 ♗h2+ 19.♔h1 ♕f4 he could have forced a queen swap, when the opposite-coloured bishops hold out some hope of a draw.
17.♖e1 h6 18.♗xf6+ gxf6 19.♖e3 h5 20.♖ae1 ♕d7



21.♕e4 Remarkably enough, this is not one of the computer's top four suggestions, despite the fact that this queen move is part of a straightforward strategic plan.
21...♔f8 22.d5 e5

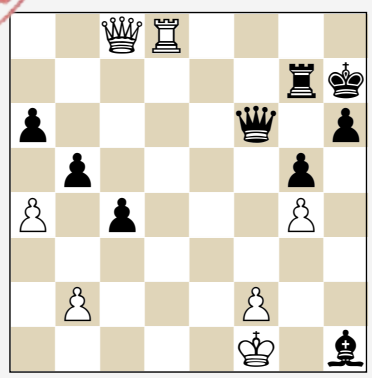


23.♖f3! This was the idea. White blocks the black kingside pawns, after which the game is won in a higher sense.

In the final round, Nakamura got another rook ending a pawn up that resulted in a draw. The result didn't threaten his tournament victory, but it was a disappointment nevertheless. When you're getting near the 2800 level, every half point is welcome. Nevertheless Nakamura has reached the point where, like Caruana and Giri, he must be regarded as a serious candidate to challenge for the world championship. Caruana and Giri both have an experienced GM for a coach, and their opening repertoires have been refined to a T. This is not something Nakamura can say. But he does have a very good sense for which opening to go for, looking for systems that he really understands. And he will have every chance in the world to develop his opening repertoire further. The same goes for the endgame. Studying the standard works by Dvoretsky and Nunn will probably enable him to make him more accurate in the final phase. ■

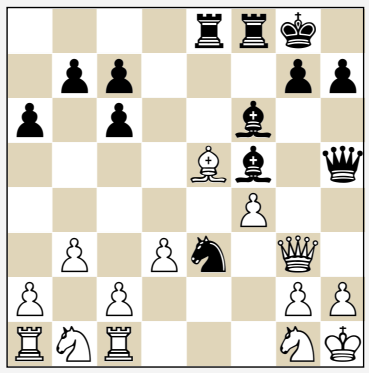
Solutions

from page 73



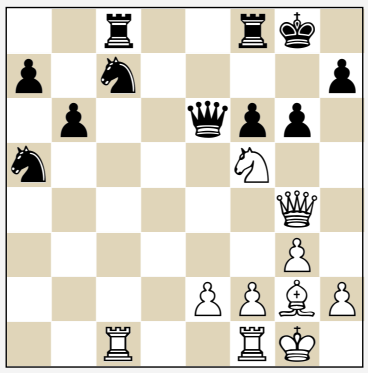
1. Williams-Van Delft
Amsterdam 2014

33.♖h8+ ♔g6 34.♖xh6+! Winning the queen and the game, as 34...♔xh6 leads to mate after 35.♕h8+ ♔g6 (35...♖h7 36.♕xf6#) 36.♕h5#!



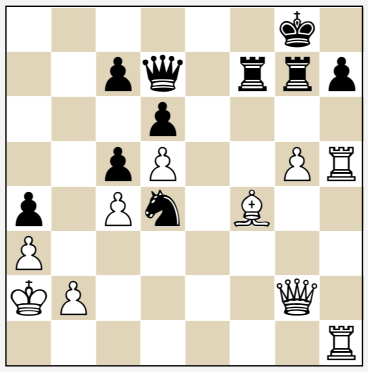
2. Khachiyan-M.Brown
Orange American Open 2014

22...♖xe5! 23.fxe5 ♗xe5! 24.♕xe5 ♘**g4** White resigned in view of the claustrophobic 25.♕g3 ♕xh2+! 26.♕xh2 ♘f2#.



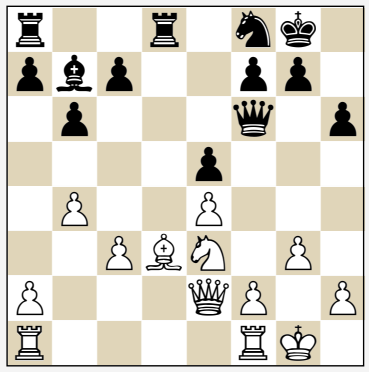
3. Panjwani-Bykhovsky
St Louis 2013

Perhaps Black hoped to get off lightly after 24.♖xc7 ♕xf5, but **24.♗d5!** forced him to throw in the towel immediately in view of 24...♘xd5 25.♘h6+ or 24...♕xd5 25.♘e7+.



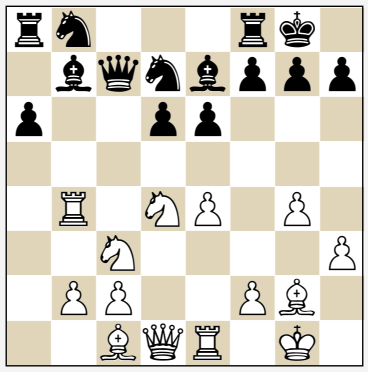
4. Barnaure-Nevednichy
Targu Mures 2014

This example is all about the art of tightening screws: **33.g6 ♖xg6 34.♕xg6+! hxg6 35.♖h8+ ♔g7** and now **36.♗g5!** boxes in the black king.



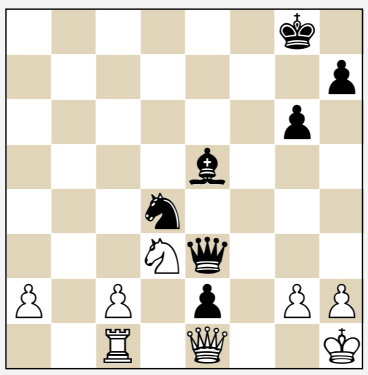
5. Simantsev-Andreev
Orlova 2014

After **17...♖xd3!** White resigned, realizing that if 18.♕xd3 ♕f3 the threat of mate on h1 will cost him at least the knight (19.♕d1 ♕xe4).



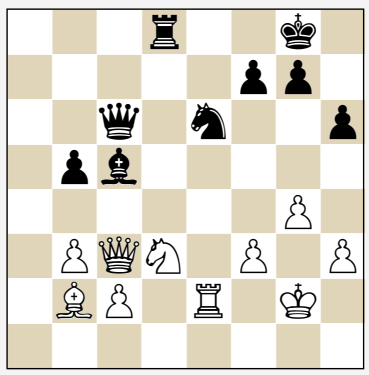
6. Zhou-Kr.Georgiev
Sunny Beach 2014

14.♖xb7! ♕xb7 15.e5 If the queen retreats White is spoilt for choice, but after **15...d5** the way to victory is narrow: **16.♘xe6! fxe6 17.♘xd5!** with decisive material gains.



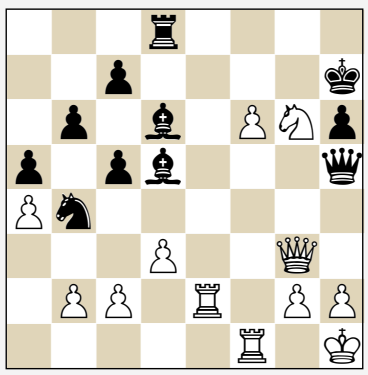
7. Golizadeh-Kotsur
Tabriz 2014

34...♘f3! 35.gxf3 35.♕b4 ♕xc1+! 36.♘xc1 e1♕+. **35...♕xf3+ 36.♔g1 ♗d4+ 37.♘f2** The king is staying alive somehow... **37...♗c3!** ... while the queen is not. 0-1.



8. Ibarra-Stella
Lorca 2014

35...♖xd3! 36.cxd3 ♘f4+ 37.♔h2 And Black's combination backfired due to mate on g7? Not at all! **37...♗g1+!** Collecting the rook and the queen. 0-1.



9. Predojevic-Schreiner
Zadar 2014

Has White gone too far? **32.♕xd6!!** 32...cxd6 33.♖e7+ ♔xg6 34.♖g7 is a pretty mate. **32...♗xg2+ 33.♖xg2** 33.♔g1! is the computer move. **33...cxd6 34.f7** and White won.

Ljubomir Ljubojevic

PEAK RATING: **2645** (3rd in the 1983 rankings)
DATE OF BIRTH: **November 2, 1950**
PLACE OF BIRTH: **Titovo Uzice, Yugoslavia**
PLACE OF RESIDENCE: **Linares, Spain**

What is your favourite colour?
Orange, because it makes me happy.

What kind of food makes you happy?
Thai cuisine; Tom Kha soup with duck.

And what drink?
Red wine. The older the better.

Who is your favourite author?
Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

What was the best or most interesting book you ever read?
One Hundred Years of Solitude. I was young and a dreamer when I read it and it made a deep impression.

What is your all-time favourite movie?
All of Milos Forman's films.

What is your favourite TV series?
I never watch series, I prefer educational channels.

Do you have a favourite actor?
Marlon Brando, Laurence Olivier. The best actors are the ones who also were theatre actors.

And a favourite actress?
Greta Garbo, a brilliant actress. But she realized that the film industry was changing her character and she preferred to return to normal life.

What music do you like listening to?
Music without words. The words I like to imagine myself.

Do you have a favourite painter?
Salvador Dali. Maybe there are painters that are technically better, but he expressed all he wanted to say.

What was your best result ever?
I never think that way. Whom you love the most, your wife or your child?

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?
Bobby Fischer, because he refreshed the chess world and was able to challenge the great Soviet chess school.

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?
The first book I read, which my mother gave me when I was seven: *The Secrets of the Chess Game*, by Vladimir Vukovic.

What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw?
I witnessed the 13th match game that Fischer won against Spassky, the Alekhine Defence. That cemented my great admiration for him.

What is the best chess country in the world?
Yugoslavia.

What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?
They are good at being selfish.

Do you have any superstitions concerning chess?
I had pens specially meant for writing chess moves. And clothes that I felt comfortable in when playing.

Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?
I would like to be my father, to understand his relations with me better.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?
I would invite good friends that have passed away, and with whom I have shared lots of good moments.

What is the best piece of advice you were ever given?
Don't rush to do everything today, leave something for tomorrow.

Is there something you'd love to learn?
The whole wisdom of humanity, but the limitations of life don't permit me.

Where is your favourite place in the world?
Belgrade, the whole of my spirit is attached to that city.

What is your greatest fear?
Since I lost my parents, I have no more fears.

What would you save from your house if it were on fire?
Anything which lives. The rest is of later concern.

How do you relax?
Sometimes I relax by being extremely active, sometimes by being very passive.

What is the stupidest rule in chess?
That you are forfeited if you are delayed for a game by an accident, a traffic jam or whatever.

Is a knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?
Chess is an educational tool until it is used in immoderate measure. In general it is useful, but in professional chess there are also negative sides.

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2015#2

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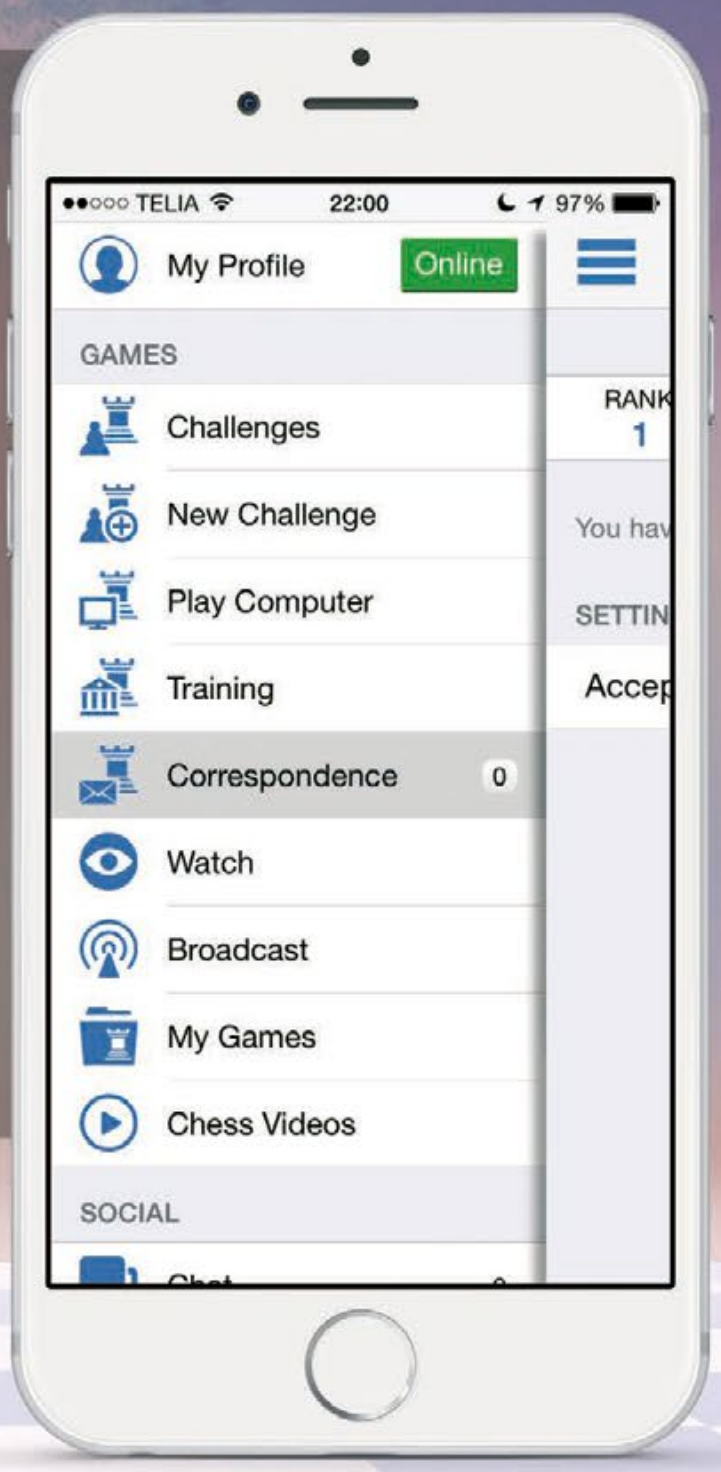

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